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THE SELF-INTERPRETATION OF JESUS

WILLIAM OWEN CARVER, M.A., TH.D., LL.D.

THE SELF-INTERPRETATION OF JESUS

BY

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THE SELF-INTERPRETATION OF JESUS
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TO

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AN INTERPRETER OF JESUS
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INTRODUCTORY

All the words of Jesus are revealing of His personality. This is true of us all. Our words are ourselves at the instant of their expression. A man's speech is his self-expression. Jesus Christ is the "Word" of God. In a similar way Christians are the "Word" of the Christ. Words are the means of communication of personality with personality. This is why Jesus is called the "Word" of God, and why we who bear His name are called the "Word" of Christ. All words express the personality of the speaker. Certain words on certain occasions are more revealing, and more vitally revealing, than other words and on other occasions. We say that our words sometimes misrepresent us. We do not wish to be judged, nor to judge ourselves, by some of the words that we speak. Jesus does not ask any such exemption. He is the one man who never needed or desired to retract any word which had gone forth from His mouth and His heart. P. Whitwell Wilson has well referred to Him as the one Friend no word of whom we need ever apologize for or wish to have changed. Yet the words of Jesus on certain special occasions count for more in our understanding of Him than other words of His. The Gospels have preserved for us a few of the "Words of grace which He spake," from among the vastly greater bulk of His

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utterances. Crises come in every life. What we say and do in these critical situations reveals the innermost character of us. We may think of Washington's Farewell Address; Lincoln's Speech at Gettysburg; Lee's words at Appomattox; Wilson's address to Congress calling the country to war; Pershing's reputed remark at LaFayette's Tomb. We think of Paul's response to the vision of Jesus on the Damascus road, on Mars Hill at Athens, to the Jews in Jerusalem, at Rome facing his martyrdom.

So in the Gospels we may readily discover situations in which the words of Jesus reveal the depths of His own self-consciousness, of His conviction concerning His relation to God, the universe and history, and His conception of how He is related to humanity. In these studies we have selected some of these critically significant occasions from the life and ministry of Jesus and made an effort to interpret the occasion and understand the words which He spoke. In nearly all cases He was not primarily interpreting Himself. This is only a secondary factor in His speech. We study this self-consciousness in His normal speech under significant circumstances. All the better do we thus ascertain how we are to think of Him. He never sought to prejudge a reaction to Himself nor to impose an estimate of His personality. Usually He does not seem even to be aiding inquiry as to Himself or to be concerned what men might be thinking of Him. He lives, acts, speaks as He would, and we hear Him and discern "what manner of Man He is."

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THE SELF-INTERPRETATION OF JESUS

CHAPTER I

THE FIRST RECORDED WORDS OF JESUS: DISCLOSING HIS CONCEPTION OF HIMSELF (*Luke* 2:40-52)

"Why is it that ye sought me? Did ye not know that I must be in the midst of the affairs of my Father?" We often treasure the first words of those who mean much to us. We remember the first words of our children. We sometimes recall and cherish the first sentence spoken by one who became an intimate friend. Here we have the first words of Jesus that can be known to us. Of course, they are not His first words. Mary—and Joseph—had already a great volume of His sayings revolving and brooding in their proud and puzzled hearts. These are the first that are preserved for humanity. No doubt they were thought of by Luke as being the first sentence of His message to mankind, His first interpretation of Himself to Himself and to men. Hence his record of them.

Before taking up the words it will be important to try to reproduce the circumstances under which they were spoken. The entire occasion will help us to understand the nature and stage of development in His character. At twelve years of age He has gone with His parents to the Passover Feast in Jerusalem. We are not to think of this as the

first time He had visited the Holy City of His people and of His traditional religion. But this visit is recorded because of the incident and of what it signifies concerning Him and His work. The story is one of the most familiar, because it is one of the most beautiful and useful of all stories. At the age of twelve a Jewish boy was supposed to be introduced to the Rabbis, inducted into a personal share in the temple worship, and to become "a child of the Law." All this experience had doubtless come to Jesus at this time. He had taken quite unusual interest in it all. The week of the feast was over. The caravan in which His family had traveled from Nazareth had set out for the return journey. Joseph and Mary had assumed that Jesus would find His place in the company and did not inquire for Him until they were pitching tent for the night. The inquiry for Him would grow to alarmed search and lead to a restless, wakeful night. The next day took them back to Jerusalem in the search for the missing lad. Then on the next morning "they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions," while all the onlookers and listeners manifestly "were amazed at His understanding and His answers." There are several items in what we may learn of Jesus from the whole situation.

1. First of all we may note His self-reliance and His reliability. Now, self-reliance is no uncommon thing in a boy of twelve. Most of them are quite more willing to take care of themselves than are their parents to trust them to direct their

conduct and care for their needs. Reliance and reliability are not always matched in the boy. He sometimes claims more in self-confidence than can be granted in confidence. Jesus was left during the feast to look after Himself and He did it. This shows how far the parents had already learned to trust Him. With the normal residents and the Passover Pilgrims, the city and all its surrounding spaces would be crowded, with a million or more people. In all this throng Joseph and Mary so far knew that Jesus was competent and to be trusted that they left Him to do as He pleased. Not even when setting off for home again did it seem necessary to make sure He was going along. Of course such confident treatment was based on experience. How self-reliant and trustworthy they must have found their boy for many years, now! He knew how to find His way in the city and in the throngs of people. He knew where to go and how to demean Himself in the temple and among the different classes of people. To be competent without being "smart," to be pertinent and not "pert," to be at the fore and not be "forward," how difficult that is, and how every noble boy and girl has been chagrined at not being able to keep, or to seem to keep, the balance in these delicate scales. To be normally self-expressive and not to become self-assertive, to act on the consciousness of self-hood and not be either embarrassed or emboldened by self-consciousness is a problem all the older of us can well remember, even though we seem usually so incapable of making the lads and lasses know that we understand

them when they grapple with the same problem.

2. We find in Jesus at this time a combination of information and acquisitiveness. He amazed all who heard Him by "His understanding and His answers," but also He was "both hearing the rabbis and asking them questions." He knew, really knew, some things better than the teachers and some things they didn't know at all. That was an achievement for a lad of twelve, and a great strain on Him. There was no bravado, no gloating, no priggishness. He really knew, but He also knew His ignorance. He related Himself to knowledge in the spirit of humility that excluded proud self-assertion. How wonderful, that, for even the maturest wise *man*. To know an amazing amount and to remain keen for learning, that is the wisdom of getting knowledge.

3. To His parents this Boy was a satisfaction and an anxiety. Such is every child. We were all born problems. Every mother can tell you how true that is. And every father knows how big a load of problem pressed upon him when in proud reverence he held his first-born in his arms. Children can't help being problems, and they are not to blame for it, unless they make themselves too insoluble a problem and remain too long a problem. Every boy must be a problem to all who are related to him until he takes over his own problem and enters definitely upon its right solution. Then what a satisfying joy he becomes.

The best boys, the cleverest and brightest are often the greatest problems. Their superior capacities call for more delicate handling and

more elaborate planning. Their education, their control, their guidance, are all more complicated than in the case of the "normal" boy. Our most serious blunders have grown out of our thinking there is such a thing as a "normal" boy or girl and of defining the norm in terms of ourselves—of ourselves only very faultily remembered.

What satisfaction and what pride Joseph and Mary had often and always found in their unusual Boy. But how He did puzzle them!

And His parents were also a problem to Him—more serious than we can realize. It is always so with any serious child. How often he is grieved and distressed and sometimes cowed and repressed by the consciousness that his motives are misjudged, his conduct falsely appraised, his desires not understood. And he dares not try to explain. How utterly alone every child feels at times. Jesus must have had many such an hour in His experience already; and He was sure to have very many more.

4. We can note in Him remarkable development and immaturity. He was a very unusual child; that impressed others. He had much to learn; that was the dominant fact in His own thought of Himself. If Saul of Tarsus could say of himself, that "he advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of his own age" (Gal.1:14) surely Jesus was mature much above His years. He accepts His unusual gifts as a profound responsibility. He must learn more and do more because of the capacity He could not help seeing was within Himself. That is a very wonderful word

with which Luke closes the narrative of this unique incident: "And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."

We may get the force of this statement better if we compare it with what is said of Him, at verse 40, as an infant. There we read that "the child grew and waxed strong, becoming full of wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him." There the words are all in the passive mode. They express unconscious, un-aimed experience of growth and development. It was all experience and none of achievement here recorded.

But of the Boy we turn to our Greek and find a wholly different word for His growth. No longer did He merely *increase,* now He *advanced.* And the significance of the Greek word cannot be overlooked. Luke wrote it προέκοπτεν. The base (root) of the word means *cut;* the προ is *forward,* ahead; the tense is imperfect, of continuous, persistent action. All that speaks of a goal, and of obstacles and difficulties; speaks of determination and effort unceasing and unremitting. He saw what He needed and went after it. *He-cut-his-way-forward,* He "forged ahead," as we say. There was much cutting to do: thickets of prejudice and misunderstanding; trammels of poverty and manifold, homely, home tasks; huge barriers of tradition, custom and convention; roots of Hebrew language, Greek construction, Latin vernacular; of history wrongly conceived and of religion misunderstood. It would take keen tools and steady effort. But *He-cut-his-way-forward.*

5. Once more, we find the Boy Jesus combining

in His conduct and relations autonomy of action with obedience in behavior. Luke tells us how He gave Mary and Joseph to understand that He must determine His actions by His consciousness of relation and responsibility to God; and then he tells us how "He went down with them and came to Nazareth; and He was subject unto them." It is no wonder Luke says "they understood not the saying which He spake unto them," and that "His mother kept all the things in her heart." She had more than a heartful with this wonderful Lad.

Now against this partially outlined background we must come directly to the Words of Jesus, and see what they may tell us of His self-consciousness.

1. We meet, first of all, His disappointment at the misunderstanding of Him by Mary and Joseph. This misunderstanding of Him by men—all men—is one of the experiences Jesus had to meet, that the Christ has to deal with all the way through. We shall find Him giving us this as one of our topics in these studies of Him. At the end He will be saying that eternal life consists in knowing Him as the one sent by the Father. In the very first word we hear from Him, Jesus is expressing grief at not being understood, and by that soul who knew and loved Him most already.

It seems a pity the feeling of necessity for dignified language has obscured for us, in all the versions, the homely simplicity and the maternal impatience and grief with which Mary addressed the

Son she had at last found. Our hearts will tell us at once that no mother under such circumstances could have uttered the stately words: "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing." We must permit Luke, who is so gifted with sympathetic accuracy, to put into English what he so well wrote in Greek. Then we shall read: "Child, why did you do us so? Behold thy father and I, too, anxiously are seeking thee." Thus we can see the astonishment, the reproach, the grieved authority and the sustained pain of the anxiety, for she uses the present tense. They had come upon Him and now knew He was found, but not yet have they been able to dismiss the feeling—still "we are seeking thee." How very natural. Yes, and how it is His turn for grief and even for rebuke. "Why is it that ye were seeking for me? Did ye not know that I must be in the midst of My Father's affairs?" Why had they not come at once to the house of His Father, to the temple? What had become of their knowledge of His ways, their trust in His conduct and capacity? Why beat blindly about alleys and side-streets? Why go in wild excitement into out-of-the-way places seeking for Him when He had established His competence and conscientiousness long ago? "Did you not know that I must be here in the temple where, just now, My Father's affairs call loudest for me?" To be distrusted is one of the sorest griefs and one of the most discouraging wrongs of childhood.

2. Jesus expresses here a definite sense of high obligation. "I must be in My Father's affairs."

When an outward *shall* is matched by an inward *must* we have loyal and true obedience. When the inner soul senses perfectly the will of God and appropriates that will with intellectual approval and emotional enthusiasm we have duty glorified in holiness. "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus frees us from the law of sin and death," because the will of God becomes the law of our nature. Paul tells us, in Phil. 2:12-13, that the complete working out of our salvation brings us to the condition where we will and do that which is well pleasing to God. Jesus was to learn obedience by the things which He suffered (Heb. 5:8). Already He has the first principles. The human obedience in a strict Jewish home had its meaning for Him. He is not afraid now to say *"I must."* That idea will bulk large in the motives of His activities in the public years of His life. The poles of His sense and rule of duty are in His own personality and in God, His Father. He must maintain the integrity and unity of Himself. Hence what His judgment pronounces right His conscience executes as an irresistible imperative. He must. It is good to hear Him say it as a Boy. It will be good to hear Him say it in the heat of the height of His ministry. It will be supreme to hear Him say it in Gethsemane, from which He moves on to Calvary, to Olivet, to "the right hand of the majesty on high."

3. His words in this primary sentence reveal Jesus as already devoted to religion and worship, to the word of God and the house of God. Later, even as now, the work of God will be His one con-

cern. It was among "the doctors of the Law" that He was speaking. Among them He has been for days. He was hearing them discuss, and discussing with them, the word of God in the Old Testament. That word is "the man of His counsel." "The courts of the Lord's house" are sought by His willing feet. He grounds His life on the scriptures and on His consciousness of God. These two factors will appear in all His teaching and doing. It is instructive to find them so evident in this first scene of His conscious life, the first expression of the quality and direction of His soul.

4. The most surprising feature of these words lies in the revelation they make of the consciousness in Jesus of a unique relation to God as His Father. We may not undertake to affirm fully and exactly what these words meant to Jesus; but we cannot be true to history or psychology if we attribute to them any meaning short of the expression of spiritual sonship unto God, as He now conceives God.

His words inevitably contrast with Mary's saying "thy father and I seek thee." It is not so much that He will contrast their claims on Him with His freedom to respond to the claims of His spiritual, heavenly Father. He does place obedience to the heavenly Father in first place for controlling conduct. Duty to God will include rightly defined obedience to earthly parents. He went home with them again as formerly, and "was subject to them" as became a true and dutiful son; but beyond and through all that obedience was

the call of the heavenly Father and the response of the spiritual Son; and if conflict should come—as come it might—the relation to the Father-God must prevail. Yet the smug arrogance of a conceited religious pride that would repudiate human obligation to parents by the pious *"Corban"* of mock devotion Jesus will be able twenty years later to denounce with a clear conscience. He knows how to make the heavenly Father supreme and definitive without repudiating human relationship or shirking any duty.

We must go deeper into His God-consciousness, however, if we are to understand Jesus calling God His Father in this connection. The daring of it, the wonder of it, the sheer audacity, have not, apparently, been much appreciated.

One must inquire first of all where He learned thus to use such a phrase; and then how He dared do so. He had never heard it so used in temple, synagogue or home. He had never met it in this direct, open, frank use in any Old Testament passage. A detailed study of the fourteen examples in His Scriptures of references to God as Father will not show a single case of an individual worshiper, however devout and however gifted with the insight of prophetic understanding, speaking in definite, personal directness of God as his Father. Jesus not only does this, but goes further and announces this relation of Father and Son between Him and His God as the determinative fact of His consciousness and conduct.

We may say, if we think so, that He is applying to Himself the striking words of the second

psalm: "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee"; and the words of Isa. 9:6, "For unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given, etc." But if we explain His words in this way we must be prepared to accept the conclusions that follow. No prophet or saint had ever thus appropriated these expressions. If this lad of twelve is doing this, he is either on the way to an intolerable insanity of spiritual pride or He is expressing a consciousness which if justified in humility, righteousness, service and fellowship with this Father must mark Him as God's Son in a sense attained by none other and possible to none else.

We know in how godly and pious a home He had grown up. We know how familiar was Mary with her Bible. There He had come to love, to learn by rote, to read, to ponder the messages in God's word. In the synagogue every Sabbath and latterly in the day schools that word had been read and expounded in His hearing. In the temple He had seen it symbolized, had heard the psalms sung in wonderful choruses and by antiphonal choirs. But here He is saying something never heard before. His thought of God is original. We have become so familiar, under His lead and teaching, with the Father idea of God, and have gained such boldness of approach in that Name that it requires an effort for us to appreciate how strange, how wonderful, how significant this term for God was upon the lips of the lad, Jesus.

God was so "high and exalted" that the Jews feared to call His covenant name, Jehovah, and lest they speak it "in vain" they rarely spoke

it at all. They sought priests, sanctified and cleansed, to approach even the mercy seat of God in their behalf. In such an environment, under such instructions this Boy, standing in some room of that Holy Temple of Jehovah, speaks of Him as Father as if that were quite the normal thing to do. What shall we say of these words as revealing what Jesus thought of Himself? It is in the same way He will speak and think of God in manhood, ministry and mission. Must we not reverently bow before Him as in His first recorded word to us He brings the Message: "God is My Father; I am God's Son."

CHAPTER II

JESUS DECLARES HIS LIFE PURPOSE: TO FULFILL ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS (*Matt.* 3:13-17; *Luke* 3:21-22)

There are eighteen years from the first words from Jesus until we are permitted again to hear Him speak or to have any specific statement concerning Him. "The silent years" the commentators call them. They were years of private life and growth. That fact is significant. How could a youth so gifted, so extraordinary, so likely to produce a sensation, remain quiet until He was thirty years old? What possibilities there were of applause, of usefulness as a "boy preacher," a youthful "prophet," a prodigy! With the peculiar consciousness of God manifest in the child how could He be restrained or restrain Himself when there was so much need everywhere for His insight and His message? There is something suggestive of what is more than humanly modest and wise in the reticence of Jesus.

How often one meets the comment that we know nothing of Jesus for all these adolescent and growing years. All of us have shared the wish that we might know what He did, how He occupied Himself and developed into that Man we meet in the Gospels. Tradition could not overlook so fruitful a field. But the stories reveal the lack of understanding of their Subject. They are all out of

character. They lay hold on the supernatural and produce incidents that contradict the reticence which marks Him in this period. The acts attributed to Him are not only out of character, and contradict John's statement that He began miracle working at Cana in Galilee (John 2:11); they are such as would inevitably have destroyed His silence and thrust Him "willy-nilly" into a public career.

Yet we are not without material to guide a reverent, constructive imagination in producing what must be a true picture of outstanding features of "the silent years." Facts we may largely—but not wholly—lack; truth we may have.

We have two fruitful phrases to guide us as we undertake to follow the Boy into His years of silent self-realization.

1. We know that He has a conviction of a relation to God such as no man had claimed or has since claimed, and that this way of thinking of God as His Father was the controlling factor in His thought and His conduct. Here then will be the center of personal interpretation and growth. For we find this the dominant note of His thought of Himself and of humanity when He comes to teach and preach and heal. He will, then, all these years be learning and expanding the meaning of having God for Father and of being, in Himself and for other men, the Son of God. Always He will be occupied with His Father's affairs.

2. And we have Luke's inspired testimony that He cut his way ahead intellectually (in wisdom),

physically (in stature), spiritually (in favor or grace) both in religious relation (with God) and in social coördination (with men). These two sentences yield us a rich fund of information if we analyze them and then study their outcome in the mature Messiah envisaged in the Gospel picture. We shall greatly err and miss much in our understanding of Jesus if we do not allow full force to Luke's statement that "He forged His way ahead." That means problems, hindrances, difficulties, opposition; and toil, labor, pains, persistence; and loyalty to an ideal ever more clearly defining itself. He was naturally extraordinary; He achieved distinction and uniqueness. We may add yet other items to enlarge our material.

3. We know that the Hebrew Bible, both in the original Hebrew and in the Greek (Septuagint) translation, is to be the basis of all His study. If at twelve He had an amazing knowledge of it and had begun already to approach it not merely as a learner of its traditional interpretations, but with questions that sought out new meanings and fresh interpretations, what joy and painstaking care He will expend in all these years in digging deep into Law and Prophet and Psalm. Days and months and years He delves into these Scriptures. He finds in them His ideal self, His Father's nature and plans, His own purpose and program and method. Every word of it seems known to Him in the open years. We are all too apt to assume that He knew His Bible "naturally." But we mistake when we so think. He could "find the place" in Isaiah which He would use for text in His home-

coming sermon at Nazareth (Luke 4:16-30) because He was familiar with its location and its look in the scroll by reason of much handling of it. He was Master of His Bible and could handle it with a freedom and originality and discrimination that aroused the greatest interest and wonder because He had worked so hard at it all these years. It came easy in later years because it came hard in earlier labors. And what came easy at last freed Him for what called for all energy in the present doing.

4. Nor must we overlook the element of prayer in His growing years. The prayer life of His full years cannot have begun with the Baptism. Easy and normal access to the Father in prayer, nights of such prayer conference in crises of His ministry, these are but the extension of a habit grown from childhood. The hills and rocks back of Nazareth held trysting places of the Son on earth and the Father from Heaven. Many a problem had been solved in the night season there in the hills where He "entered His closet and shut the door" the while He wrought with God, and God wrought into Him.

5. And the school of life had for Him lessons rich and stern.

He was "the carpenter's son" and early his apprentice as well, to become Himself the maker of tools and utensils, furniture and finishings for the simple houses of humble homes. He was learning to produce a new humanity and to reconstruct history while handling the tools in homely tasks for humble folk.

It was no mere pastime of a student that occupied Him thus, not the recreational activity of one occupied with "intellectual and spiritual" studies and reflections. His avocation early necessarily became His vocation.

The Gospels nowhere speak of Joseph as living during the ministry of Jesus. They do speak of Mary and of the members of the family in a way to confirm the tradition that Joseph died in the youth of Jesus. In the closing paragraph of the thirteenth chapter of Matthew (54 ff.), we have His four brothers named, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas, and of His sisters the neighbors say "are they not all with us?" The "all" speaks of at least three. Our knowledge of Jewish custom enables us to infer that Mary was around twenty at the birth of Jesus. We must think of her left a widow when under forty with at least eight children. Jesus was probably between fifteen and eighteen. He became the head of the household. In their moderate circumstances the struggle for physical necessities would be strenuous for the young carpenter. He accepted His lot and took up His burden. Nor did He lay it down until the family were all reared, at least to possible competency. We can understand in this light why, humanly speaking, He never attended any of the rabbinical schools at Jerusalem which had for Him such fascination as a lad of twelve. Of course we would say that there was no school that could have taught Him as He would learn. But no matter how eager He may have been for such schooling the opportunity was denied Him. He

had to work hard, early and late, to make ends meet in that crowded cottage. Indirectly He must learn what the schools taught, and He certainly knew when He came to meet their pupils and teachers in later years.

How serious were the conferences Jesus and Mary held at night over the needs of the family, the food and raiment and drink concerning which He will later tell us not to worry. These must be found in sufficient measure for growing boys and girls. And there were other problems more serious: education and morals and religion. How shall they be solved for the worthy bringing up of this big family? And we may be sure these boys, so near His own age, were not easy for Jesus to manage, or to get on with at all. His superiority would as often nettle and "rile" them as command admiration and deference. Six months before His crucifixion they taunted His pretensions and challenged Him to go on to Jerusalem and publish His claims so as to have the crisis over, one way or another. This was far from being the first time they had failed to appreciate Him.

What intimacies of soul He and Mary had in planning and praying together, often after all the children were abed. How blest the widow with such a Son! How high the challenge to every son similarly placed! How much it meant to Him to be schooled in such providences as these as He "learned obedience" and "sympathy" "by the things He experienced."

We can understand, again humanly speaking, why Jesus did not begin His ministry until He

was thirty years old. To be sure, His ministry must wait on that of John; but the Holy Spirit was controlling and timing both. Jesus must first finish the task in Nazareth.

At length that task was complete. He could lay upon other shoulders all the home burdens. Palestine is athrill with the sensation of the New Prophet of the Hills, the Evangelist of the Jordan. Not for four hundred years has one so spoken for the living God. Every community is stirred. It is all the talk. No hamlet is unmoved. From every section companies are forming for pilgrimage down to the great camp meetings in the Jericho valley. Some have returned to Nazareth and tell in excited tones to awed throngs of the wonderful preacher and his burning message: "The day of the Lord is at hand."

I think Mary noticed a strange light in the eye of her First-born. There was a far-away air about Him, as if He felt in His soul the call to a new career. He was more than usually reticent. He spent more time out in the hills alone. Each morning He took with Him to the little shop a "roll of the Book." From it He would read a bit, then lay it upon a shelf while He worked and thought; then read again, and turn almost absent-mindedly to work again. All this Mary's keen, discerning eye saw. There was nothing for her to say. Then there came an evening when she noted that He carefully put away His tools, swept the shop out all clean and shut the door with a care that spelled finality. He came into the house and laid up His scroll and went out into the solitude of

the night. When late into the night He still did not come, Mary went and got the scroll to see what He had been reading. Her eyes fell on the words in what we call the Fortieth Psalm:

"Sacrifice and offering thou hast no delight in;
Mine ears hast thou opened:
Burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required.
Then said I, Lo, I am come;
In the roll of the Book it is prescribed for me:
I delight to do thy will, O my God;
Yea, thy Law is written in my heart.
I have proclaimed [have to proclaim] glad tidings of righteousness in the great assembly;
Lo, I will not refrain my lips,
O Jehovah, thou knowest.
I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart;
I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation;
I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great assembly" (vv. 6-10, cf. Heb. 10:5 ff.)

Mary could not think of sleep. She got together a "change of raiment" and prepared a simple lunch, all of which she made into a neat packet. Then she got ready a simple breakfast. In the morning twilight she saw Him coming in from His night with that Father about whose affairs it is needful for Him to be. Mary met Him, very

quietly, and led Him to the waiting breakfast. As they sat and He ate she watched Him furtively, lovingly, longingly. They did not talk much. Rather they felt each other and mingled their souls in spiritual converse and questioning. As He finished Mary went and brought out the packet, and handed it to Him. She helped Him adjust it, thus to touch Him with her hands in gentle caress. A moment they gazed into the deeps of each other's eyes. Very gently He placed His arm about her, drew her to Him as they stood together there in the doorway, planted a kiss on her upturned face. No word was spoken. He turned about, walked past the little shop, followed the path as it wound eastward and south and then, more than a quarter of a mile below, passed around the point out of sight into the highway leading down to Judea and the Jordan. Mary turned into her house with a great surge of mingled feeling and fell on her face on His bed. She knew that her wonderful Son had gone out into the world to do His work, to attend to the affairs of His Father. There are some of us who know, as far as we humans may know, what it means to a young man thus to go out from the home, and who know also what it means to the mother's heart and the father's soul to see them go. O God, that we may know that they go out to follow Him, "to do the will of God"!

Two days later through the throngs about the Baptizing Prophet came a serious, modest Man and asked to be baptized. With emphasis that marks astonishment and determination John demurs: "I have need to be baptized by Thee, and

Thou, dost Thou come unto me?" Jesus said in reply: "Allow it in this instance; for thus is it fitting to fulfill all righteousness." Then John yielded and baptized Him. Immediately upon being baptized Jesus prayed. In response to that prayer there came, for Him and John, at least, a vision of heaven opened and the Holy Spirit in bodily form like a dove coming down and alighting on Jesus to abide; and a voice that said: "This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I am pleased."

Let us not be disturbed by the superficial inconsistency between John's protest against baptizing Jesus and his own statement (John 1:31-34) that the Messiah was unknown to him, and was recognized in the manifestation of the Spirit and the Voice. John does not say that he did not know Jesus, the Man; but that he did not know the Christ, the Redeemer, anointed of God. He declared that He was already in the midst of the people and to be manifested. John and Jesus were kinsmen and their mothers intimate friends, sharing their transcendent secrets of God's grace in their sons. John was probably left an orphan. That he "was in the deserts until the day of his showing unto Israel" (Luke 1:80) does not mean that he never mingled at all with people. The one home in all the land to which he would go would be the carpenter home in Nazareth. He and Jesus had too much in common not to know each other and to talk together of the things of God.

John was preaching repentance, sternly as well as graciously calling on men to confess their sins and turn unto the coming kingdom of God. His

baptism was the symbolic embodying of that repentance and the washing away of the sins of the man who accepted it.

He did not know that Jesus was the Christ. He may have suspected it. He did know Him as the cleanest, purest, godliest man his eyes had looked upon. So he drew back from Jesus, declaring: "You are a far better man than I. As between You and me You must be my confessor and wash away my sins." Jesus' reply is: "I am not coming in repentance; not asking you to hear a confession. I am asking that you baptize Me in dedication of Myself to My life-purpose." On that basis John agreed and the baptism was performed.

Now in all this there stand out certain important features.

1. Jesus calmly assumes the direction of John. Here is a modest, obscure young artisan standing before the man before whom multitudes from all corners of the land quailed and hid their faces in confusion over sin. Here is the greatest preacher Israel has known since the Captivity, the first prophet in hundreds of years, the man who rebuked kings and denounced the sins of the priests of God. The young Carpenter quietly directs the prophet's course; the prophet owns the command and obeys. Truly "one greater than John the Baptist is here."

2. We have said Jesus was baptized in dedication of Himself to His life-purpose. That purpose has long been forming and defining itself in His thinking and planning. Now it is clear, definite,

certain. It has been wrought out in His Bible studies which it is easy to see centered in the great spiritual passages of the Law of Moses, in the Messianic Psalms, and preëminently in the Prophets, especially in Isaiah's visions of the Messianic reign and "the songs of the suffering servant of Jehovah."

The purpose has been defined in periods of meditation prolonged and profound, in nights of prayer, communion and counsel with God, His Father.

That purpose is part of His peculiar and now perfect God-consciousness.

He dedicates Himself to it wholly, unreservedly, and to all its implications and obligations. For this He buries in the past all His sacred secular tasks. No more can they claim Him or assert any claim upon Him.

Hear Him state the purpose to which He is now committed in the water symbol of death and resurrection: "It is fitting to fulfill all righteousness." Nothing higher, holier, more comprehensive, more costly, could be conceived. He does not propose to be a good man, merely, noble as that is. Nor to do righteousness, important as that is. Nor will He be content to live cleanly, righteously and generously, fine as that ideal is for any man. For Him there is no objective short of fulfilling "every aspect of righteousness." That means, must mean in the light of His words and His life, that He sets Himself to do all that the Father-God of His consciousness, the Holy and Righteous One of Israel's revelation, has in purpose and power to

do in the human race. He will do as a man all the righteousness that one man can do in His relations. But that is only the beginning, only the personal condition of the purpose before Him. If He succeeds the will of God will be done on earth as it is in heaven and His Father's name will be hallowed in all the earth. Such is the purpose with which He went into the Jordan.

He goes to John because John links up His new work with God's work in the former order of Israel and with the Covenant. He will carry to the full all that God has begun in the ages past. God's purpose is unchanging, His work continuous. There can be no real break with the past, even when a new era is inaugurated.

3. Jesus has no delusions about the task He is undertaking. He knows enough of human nature and of history to see what He is facing. Yet "He will not fail nor be discouraged till He have set justice in the earth" (Isa. 42:4). That is why He enters His work through the baptism in the Jordan. "*Thus* it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness"—οὕτως, *in this manner*. He knows that to realize such a high purpose He must raise a dead humanity to life. And He knows that at the other end of His personal ministry there will be another burial with its resurrection. He commits Himself to it all. The temple of righteousness He will build will have its corner stone laid in an emptied grave. It is no mechanical plan He projects, but a task of remaking personality perceived by an insight into the facts of humanity and an acceptance of all that the facts involve.

4. The scene closes with the seal of divine approval. Not alone will Jesus undertake so transcendent a task. Fully convinced and fully dedicated as He is, He falls on His knees at the water's edge in prayer. The response is quick and wonderful. Heaven opens for the Spirit of Deity to join Him. Together they will work for this high goal, even as the Prophet foretold (see Isa. 42:1 ff., 61:1 ff., 48:16, etc.). And the voice of the Father spoke to the spirit of His Son in approval of His purpose and of His dedication to it: "Thou art my Son, the Beloved, in Thee I am pleased." (See Luke 3:22.)

Thus the story of the Baptism of Jesus. What can we make of it? What but to accept it, to own Him, to follow Him. No man could have invented this scene. Unmistakably it aims to portray the presence of deity in humanity undertaking, in complete divine energy, to realize divine righteousness on earth. The marvelous combination of ideas and aims and method could never have come to any man unless he had seen them set before the eyes of his soul in living Personality.

One other word we cannot forbear. We all have our life aim and purpose, more or less distinct, more or less compelling, more or less absorbing. Are we ready to bury all in baptism into that purpose? Can we hear the God and Father say to us as we commit ourselves to our purpose: "Thou art my child; I love thee; I approve of thee and of thy purpose"? Can any one of us go on in life unless he can have a purpose on which that blessing of God rests?

CHAPTER III

THE TEMPTATION ANSWERS: JESUS REVEALS HIS PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT (*Matt.* 4:1-11, *Mark* 1:12 f., *Luke* 4:1-14)

A great Life Ideal is not in itself sufficient to produce a great life. The great ideal is essential for the great life; but is not all-sufficient for it.

Jesus had a clear consciousness of His unique relation to God. He is the one Son of the infinite Father. He has a clearly defined and firmly fixed purpose "to fulfill all righteousness." With this consciousness and this purpose He went to His baptism. In that baptism He buried all His secular, private and family life and responsibilities and arose to be the Servant of Jehovah to fulfill the world mission, the universal function for which He "had become flesh to dwell among men." No sin did He leave behind, for He had none. Yet even He must make the definite break with the former life and the definite committal wholly to His Messianic Calling.

This Great Consecration was quickly followed by the Great Temptation. It is always so. One is never permitted to go unhindered into a life of consecrated service of God and men. The consecration of Jesus had been marked by the baptism, the prayer, the Holy Spirit, the approving

Voice. Then immediately follows the forty days of temptation.

There are some general considerations about these temptations through which we must approach any analysis of them.

1. First of all we face the question of the possibility and the reality of Jesus being tempted at all. It is no easy question. Indeed we shall do well frankly to confess at once that there are depths to it which we cannot fathom. How much, in truth, do we know of the metaphysics of any temptation? We know the dreadful fact in ourselves, and we can see and accept the fact in Jesus. In His case it was altogether inevitable. He could not be human and escape it. He could not be ideally human without temptation assailing Him with an intensity known to no other. In Him the issue was joined between sin and holiness, between righteousness and evil, between God and the devil. Satan knew how great was the issue. If he could get Jesus, by so much as one dimly darkening stain of sin, he could hold the world: if he failed with Jesus he must give up the world and surrender mankind to the grace of God in Christ Jesus. The older theologians gave much time and energy to discussing whether Jesus could or could not sin. The glorious fact that spells salvation and victory for us is that He could not sin. We may postpone the discussion of the proposition that He could not sin. He was *not able to sin.*

2. It will help us to recall what preparation Jesus had for temptation and for resisting and overcoming it. We think first of His home train-

ing. The spirit and ideals of the home; the instruction and example of the home; the habits and standards all play a part in the set of the soul in relation to sin and in determining how it will react to temptation. Habits of obedience under the authority of the home helped. Restraints and constraints of control of an immature, growing personality can alone give the sense of authority and responsibility on the basis of which one may become morally and righteously autonomous. Without the teaching and the learning of authority self-will develops, but self-control is lacking. Modern pedagogical theory is defective—and often wholly deficient—at this point. To allow only self-expression in the child, under a guidance that avoids all exercise of authoritative control, is to deprive the child of the knowledge of the principle of obedience. And without that knowledge the child is doomed to develop into a self-willed, selfish, domineering adult, or else to be broken and baffled and destroyed in the conflict with the authority of nature and the cosmic order which are enforced upon us all, whatever our theories.

Jesus learned obedience and set up in His own soul the perfect command of God. The consciousness of God in His life and in all the world influenced Jesus. He gave Himself up to this. He lived in God and God lived in Him. He hid God's word in His heart that He might not sin against God's law (cf. Ps. 119:11). He met every temptation with an instantly recalled text from His Bible. And so He was able to do always in

the multiform situations that met Him in a busy ministry. These texts did not "just come to Him naturally." They came because He had stored mind and heart with them in the memory days of childhood, had matured their meaning in the meditative days of young manhood, had related them to practical duties in the stern demands of living contacts with men.

We must keep in mind, too, that He was a man of prayer. Between His baptism and the wilderness He slipped in a praying hour. That was the normal way with Him.

And all is crowned by the leadership of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit had come to abide upon Him. It is surely on first thought startling, even shocking, that the first influence of the Holy Spirit is to "lead Him into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." Mark's language here is very strong: "And straightway the Spirit driveth Him forth into the wilderness." It was a terrible experience. We get the echo of it when Jesus comes to teach us to pray, "Lead us not into temptation," and when He exhorts His disciples: "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." No other man was ever so seriously, so persistently, so subtly beset by Satan. There is infinite significance in Luke's being able to say (4:13-14): "And when the devil had finished every temptation he departed from Him for (until) a season. And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee." Because He met temptation in the control of the Spirit He could minister to men in the power of the Spirit.

3. A word needs now to be spoken of the purpose of the temptation, and of its value. Already we have indicated that it is part of the discipline by which Jesus was perfected in Saviorhood by the experiences which He suffered. We may not comprehend the fact that He could not "be made in all things like unto His brethren" without growing into the complete mastery of our conditions by coming up through them. We can at least see that "being tempted in all points like as we are" enabled Him to "become a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining unto God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people" (Heb. 2:17-18), because He would thus be able to "bear gently with the ignorant and erring." His experience of our limitations and struggles illuminates the Psalmist's assurance that "God knoweth our frame and remembereth that we are dust." "For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted." We may "therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16).

When we think of the temptations as a part of Jesus' own experience and life their significance lies in their giving Him occasion to fix and declare the principles of conduct. No life can be lived consistently unless grounded in and always motivated by inviolable principles. No man can be always honest unless truth is imbedded "in the inward parts." A sudden, unanticipated opportunity to gain wealth by dishonesty, or a sudden

danger of losing by strict integrity, will plunge him into crooked dealing unless he has so fixed his rule of behavior that dishonesty is not in him.

Will one ever lie in an emergency? Unless truth is an inviolable principle of character, and so an unfailing rule of conduct, in a crisis one will resort to falsehood. So of all sins. If we allow that we may ever commit them we certainly will fall into them. Jesus fixed all that at the start. Paul exhorts: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to do its longings" (Rom. 13:14).

Most of our words and deeds are done by impulse. We do not, and cannot, anticipate them. We go forth in the morning never knowing what situations will face us calling for word and deed. There is no opportunity in most cases for reflection, for weighing considerations. The religious and moral opportunist will say and do what the situation suggests as the easy, the pleasant, the profitable thing. The true man or woman will do right. Jesus was going forth to the most strenuous, the most delicately trying, the most bitterly contested task that could engage a life. He carried into it the greatest and most important purpose that ever stirred a living soul. No mistakes of His can be corrected, compensated or atoned for. He must do right. He is not living for Himself alone, but for all men. In a measure this is true of every one of us.

The period of temptation was to fix for Him the goal He will seek—always; the interest that will control—always. There can be no faltering for

Him, no vacillation, no compromise, no temporizing. That inner experience in which He faced Himself and fixed His personal relation to His task, to His powers, to His safety, to men and to devils, this is the great significance of the temptation. We cannot understand the temptation unless we approach it with the understanding that Jesus is undertaking the rôle of Messiah, undertaking to fulfill God's plan outlined in the deeper spiritual sections of the Old Testament, undertaking to fulfill all righteousness in a world where men are weak and proud, and sinful and lost.

He has just received the Father's approval. The Holy Spirit is linked with Him for service, but His acts are still to be His own. He has superhuman powers. No man save John the Baptist knows as yet that He is the Messiah. How shall He win this recognition? How will He use this superior power? These questions must be settled at once, and all that relates to them.

We will not make the mistake of supposing that this one conflict ended His fight with Satan and temptation. "When he had tried every temptation the devil left Him *'for a season,'* " we read in our versions. That suggests return and repetition. The Greek makes this definite, for it reads, not "for a season," but "until an opportunity." This was the decisive battle, but not the end of the war. Many "seasons" came. Indeed the temptations were almost continuous. The devil does not easily admit defeat. He never surren-

ders. He kept up his attacks on Jesus all the way to the cross. He came in enemies, came in false friends and what is most dangerous to us all, he came in the true and loved friends. Even the Twelve, Peter preëminently, and the Mother beloved and the brothers of Jesus were used as instruments of temptation to Him. The poor and needy whom He loved and so longed to help tempted Him to turn aside from the high goal of Messiahship and devote Himself to present relief and to material service. All this, and vastly more than we may pause here even to summarize, lay ahead of Jesus now that He begins to be the promised, planned, and sorely needed Messiah, Servant of Jehovah, Redeemer of men. The wilderness days are testing days, principle-defining days.

Nor will we mistake by thinking of only three temptations. These are but the strenuous onslaught at the climax. "He was in the wilderness forty days undergoing temptation by the devil." The whole period was a series of temptations.

Let us see what we may make of the three supreme tests recorded as marking the climax.

1. "If thou art the Son of God, command this stone that it become a loaf of bread." Jesus had just heard God call Him "My Son, the Beloved." For eighteen years, at least, He has known that He is Son of God. Satan does not attack that. That is too much a matter of clear consciousness. The temptation is, not to question the relation to God, but to doubt God's fairness in dealing with His Son. "He hungered and the devil said: 'Use your power to make bread to feed yourself. It is

not right or just for God's Son to be hungry.'" No doubt Jesus is conscious of miracle-working power now in Him ready for expression. How will He use it? It is suggested to Him that His first use of it will be to feed Himself. He has this power from His Father to be used in the service of men and in the work of the kingdom of heaven. If He can be made to use it in His own interest first of all, that power will be perverted from the start. The Son of God will then live, not as other men, but by special provision. He will be an exception. He refuses, once and for all. He held this power as a gift sacred for service. He uses it, widely, lavishly, for men and for the glory of His Father, but never once for Himself. He will feed multitudes by the word of command, but will Himself eat no miracle food. He never evades hunger, thirst, weariness, distress, nor relieves it supernaturally in Himself. He settles that matter now at the first consciousness of the possession of this power, and when He is facing a real need, with hunger gnawing at His stomach.

And He was facing just the temptation of every human being with any consciousness of power, in intellect, in genius, in possessions. Will one use it to serve and advance self or will he hold it sacred for the service of men as a ministrant for God.

2. When Jesus will not question the goodness and justice of His Father the temptation shifts to an appeal to ambition. It is not a crass appeal to a sordid ambition. It is quite in line with the ideals and aims in the heart of Jesus. Leading

Him up to some height from which the wide vision could easily be made to suggest "all the inhabited earth," the devil showed Him all the kingdoms of men and the glory of being their political head. He proposed at once to make Him the master of all the world if only Jesus would for once do obeisance before him. "If you do me that honor," he said, "to Thee will I give this authority entire and their glory." The word used does not need to mean "worship." It means normally an act recognizing exalted personality or position and may be used as between men. It is used to describe Cornelius' act of prostrate respect before Peter (Acts 10:25). Satan knew that Jesus wished and expected to win the world. There was in the mind of Jesus at this time probably the pledge of the Second Psalm:

"I will tell of the decree:
Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my son;
This day have I begotten thee.
Ask of me, and I will give *thee* the nations for thine inheritance,
And the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." (vv. 7-8.)

In many other phrases and forms the Old Testament bore this assurance to the Messianic Servant of Jehovah. Jesus certainly means to take mankind for His field and to bring them into the kingdom of God as His goal. How will He do it? Where will He ever make a beginning? He has no reputation, no standing, no influence of

position, no friends in power in any place to aid Him. He is contemplating spiritual methods, personal appeal, the attraction of ideals, of holiness, of personality. It is to be a slow process, and very difficult. The devil spoke with much of truth when he claimed the authority of human kingdoms and declared that to whomsoever he would he was in the habit of bestowing rulership. He will abdicate in favor of Jesus, and will actively aid in placing Him in authority on condition of Jesus recognizing this power and authority of the Evil One. He makes no mention now of God, leaving Him wholly out of the reckoning. That is a favorite way with the devil, and one of our most common sins, just ignoring God and raising no question of His will, or of the principle of right and wrong. That is the greatest defect and sin of our generation—just acting as if God were not.

But Jesus will not forget God. And He will not temporize or argue with the devil. Instantly, decisively, finally, He commands him to be off. "Get behind, Satan: for it is written; As Lord thou shalt do obeisance to thy God, and to Him alone shalt thou give worship." Satan offered Jesus the human race in mass to use for His own exaltation. Jesus sees them as multitudes needing Him, whom He must rescue and save and transform into a kingdom of heaven. He rejects the thought of regarding men as instruments of His own exaltation and glorification and insists on treating them as subjects of loving service. We may understand something of the nature of this

temptation if we think of a German Prince who came to the throne forty years ago. To him the devil showed all the kingdoms of the world and their glory if he would bow to him, placing might in first place among the virtues of rulers, and the sword above the cross. The glamour of this glory dazzled the eyes and bedeviled the soul of Wilhelm. We know the mad pace it led him and the maelstrom of ruin in which it engulfed Europe and the world. And all the time the Kaiser was allowed to persuade himself he was a worshiper of God and a benefactor of men. And was not the German Kaiser just the supreme exhibition of the dominant spirit of nationalism and international standards? What a contrast Jesus presents. There in the wilderness He settled the way He would think of men.

3. There remains yet one question. How shall men find out that Jesus is the Christ of God, the Hope of Israel, the Redeemer of prophecy, the Savior He longs to be and means to be? Where and how shall He proclaim Himself? A suggestion is ready. Select a feast day. The multitudes will be assembled in all the temple courts in the Holy City. John's preaching has set tens of thousands thinking "the Day of Jehovah" is near, "the Kingdom of God is at hand." Now let Jesus ascend to the roof and suddenly, from one of the wings of that sacred building, float down into the midst of the crowds, God's Servant arriving from the skies. It will all be easy. There can be no danger. God has promised to "give His angels charge concerning Thee, to guard Thee," and

"On their hands they shall bear Thee up,
Lest Thou dash Thy foot against a stone."

When the people see this His reputation will be instant. All will know He has come from God. By such spectacular short-cut Jesus may win a place and a following. How much easier and how much more speedily effective than the quiet, slow method of winning individuals by the truth and by personal influence. Here is a suggestion that Jesus take into His own hands the work of His ministry and place upon God the responsibility of backing Him up in His plans. The end is not affected. It is only the means that He is to determine for Himself. But Jesus will take God's way to God's ends. He will not seek to place God under obligation. The Son must do the Father's work in the Father's way.

May we not now summarize the elements in these temptations and see how comprehensively they compass our own? "He was tempted in all points like as we are." (1) He was tempted first to doubt God, then to ignore God, and finally to use God for plans that would be His own and not God's. (2) There was first the temptation to satisfy a need—He was really hungry and His body must be nourished; then to gratify an ambition—He wanted the world, and for good purposes of blessing and helpfulness: why not use the devil to get it?; lastly to display a possession —He could come down from the temple through the air safely, and it would deceive no man con-

cerning His powers. (3) Self played a part in every temptation, as of necessity it always must. First He was asked to serve Himself with a power given for service and for the glory of God; then to make the kingdom of God a means for His own aggrandizement, lastly to relieve Himself of toil and trouble, making His way easier when the true way was hard. (4) In the relation of the spiritual and the material values He was first asked to make physical gratification the test of His life and not the soul's relation to God and duty; then to materialize His conception of the Kingdom He would found, making it primarily political and not spiritual; and lastly to seek recognition by a physical miracle rather than by spiritual transformation of men. Here again we face the most common dangers in religion. At this moment throughout America there is raging a conflict of thought and debate as to the place of the physical miracle in the religion of Jesus.

What, now, shall we find in the actual words of Jesus in the face of all these questions and suggestions?

1. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." "A man's life consisteth not in the things he possesseth." A man can die, but the Son of God cannot ignore God's word. He can die, He must not sin. "Is not the life more than the food?" The primary vice, on the religious side, in Christian Science is that its supreme test of faith and piety is found in the degree of comfort

in the physical self. Jesus' rule of conduct is: *A child of God must make God's will the sole guide in what he will do.* "My food and my drink is to do the will of Him that sent me" is the way He phrases it for the Twelve at Jacob's well.

2. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shall thou serve." There can be no divided allegiance, no compromise with evil even as a means to a holy end. There can be no corrupting of the means that does not contaminate the result. *Every act must be part of the worship of God.* Jesus makes all this very clear, very emphatic. He did not temporize, nor argue with Satan. There was no hesitation. "He who hesitates is lost." When we stop to parley with the devil we have already thus far surrendered to him. Jesus never betrayed a weak place in the armor of His resistance and so did not invite a second thrust in the same spot. And when the devil was done Jesus let Him go. There was no gloating, no spiritual pride.

3. "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Neither presumption nor doubt has any place in our dealing with the heavenly Father. *We will trust Him so absolutely* that there will be no testing of His word, but reliance on it at all times. There will be no taking control out of His hands and still expecting Him to rescue us from the dangers of our disbelief or of neglect of His counsel and will.

Such were the principles with which Jesus came out of the wilderness, led by the Holy Spirit. His temptations had been desperate. They were per-

sonal, powerful, progressive, official, universal. They appeal to the physical, the psychological, the spiritual tendencies in His being. They involved His private life and character; His social ideal and human attitude; His divine relations. In the face of them all He came forth with the principles by which He lived and toiled, "enduring such contradiction of sinners against Himself," "resisting unto blood striving against sin" (Heb. 12:3 f.). In the end He was able to say, as He faced His death: "The prince of this world cometh and he hath nothing in Me" (John 12:31); "Father, I have glorified Thee in the earth, having finished the work which thou gavest Me to do" (John 17:4).

Are we not bound to say, with the author of Hebrews, that this "Son, who learned obedience by the things which He suffered, and was made perfect, became unto all them that obey Him the author of eternal salvation" (Heb. 5:8-9)?

CHAPTER IV

THE HOME-COMING SERMON: DEFINING HIS RELATION TO MESSIANIC PROPHECY (*Luke* 4:16-30)

Jesus, apparently, returned from the period of temptation for two days with John the Baptist. Here He began privately to attract a personal following. His first two disciples were directed to Him by the Baptist. These brought others. Jesus won Philip. Soon He was returning to Galilee with a half dozen or more who already owned Him as Teacher, Friend, Messiah.

From this small beginning His reputation spread, His popularity grew, His following multiplied. At the wedding feast in Cana He made the first "beginning of signs" "and manifested His glory," by reason of which in a new and deeper sense "His disciples believed on Him."

He attended a passover in Jerusalem where by cleansing the temple He raised an issue between Himself and the religious authorities. Nicodemus visited Him. His growing reputation was surpassing that of John the Baptist. The jealousy and envy of the Pharisees was rising. He returns to Galilee through Samaria, where in a ministry of two days many Samaritans believed on Him.

Altogether some months have passed since that morning when He quietly said farewell to His

home and shop in Nazareth and to Mary. In these months He had become famous. He was the most talked of man in all the land. He comes back home for a brief stay. The town was all a-buzz. The Carpenter who disappeared a few months before has returned a Rabbi, and much more than a Rabbi. Cana was within fifteen miles, and a day's journey would bring you to Capernaum, flourishing city by the beautiful blue Sea of Galilee, the center of His recent, as also of His future operations. All knew about Him, and wondered. Now He is back in the home town for a visit.

It is the Sabbath. His custom from earliest days will take Him to the synagogue, the town meeting place for worship. He is now a teacher and a preacher. Of course He will preach. Indeed, it is known that of late He speaks in some synagogue practically every Sabbath day. The local "ruler of the synagogue" in all probability had invited Him to "take the service" for the day. However that may be, "He entered, as His custom was, into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and took His stand to read." Whether He had timed His visit so as to have the appointed "lesson of the day" fit His purposes, or whether He had arranged with the attendant we cannot know. He had evidently deliberately chosen what scripture He would read and expound that day. There was handed to Him a small scroll containing a part—probably not more than the Second Part and possibly not all even of that—of the writings of Isaiah.

He found the passage He desired. It was our Chapter LXI. Luke identifies it for us by quoting what corresponds to our verse one and a clause in verse two. Whether the reading included more we may not say with certainty. The quotation in Luke breaks off in the midst of a sentence which continues through verse three and ends a paragraph. The last paragraph in the chapter (vv. 10-11) fits perfectly the first paragraph from which Luke quotes: "I will greatly rejoice in Jehovah. My soul shall be joyful in my God: for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with a garland, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels. For as the earth bringeth forth its bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord Jehovah will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations."

It will at once be evident that this fits perfectly with what Luke quotes, and all the more so if we quote the first paragraph in full. First, as Luke cites it for identifying the passage: "The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me; because He hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening *of the prison* to them that are bound; to proclaim the year of Jehovah's favor." Here Luke breaks off. The paragraph continues: "and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in

Zion, to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, that He may be glorified."

Not only do the two paragraphs harmonize and complement each other, but the close of the second paragraph: "so the Lord Jehovah will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations," would explain how Jesus came to speak of the widow of Zarephath, and of Naaman the Syrian, for which there seems no connection if we suppose that Jesus read only the part of a sentence which Luke quotes. And we have altogether a completer basis for the sermon of Jesus if we assume that He used all this. This fuller reading is not essential for the significance of the words of Jesus in applying the passage to Himself, although it gives a clearer applicability.

There are several items in the application from which we see how Jesus was interpreting Himself.

1. Of initial significance is the appropriation by Jesus, for explaining Himself, of the most vital, exalted, spiritual predictions and descriptions of the Messiah.

The case before us is but one example of such use of the Messianic Scriptures. This was a consistent element in His teaching, an established habit of His thinking concerning Himself. Here He frankly affirms: "To-day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." This was His opening statement. He returned the scroll from which He had

read to the attendant; sat down, the customary attitude for a teaching rabbi, waited for perfect attention and expectant suspense until "the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him"; then made this bold, tremendously significant statement. Luke's record puts distinguishing emphasis on this affirmation of Jesus that He brings the fulfillment of the prophecy, by giving no other item of the constructive teaching. Then he adds to the emphasis by reporting that Jesus tells them solemnly ("verily") that He cannot expect from His neighbors' acceptance of His functional office because "no prophet is acceptable in his native place." Jesus offends further by justifying His freedom in the interpretation and exercise of His function as Prophet by citing the sovereign will of God in sending His blessings through Elijah and Elisha to the widow of Zarephath and to Naaman, the Syrian. He is thus asserting His autonomy as Fulfiller of the Messianic prophecies, and His independence of popular wish and current expectation. The introduction of these heathen as the sole beneficiaries of grace in the instances cited by Jesus, as suggested above, was probably in connection with the prediction that "the nations" were to share His salvation (Isa. 61:11).

At first the audience were highly pleased and favorable, "bearing witness to Him, and wondering at the words of grace which proceeded out of His mouth." His reference to their wish that He do miracles for them must be in response to some such demand expressly made at the time.

From this He goes on to the claim of authority and autonomy in Messianic functions and to the repudiation of their Jewish prejudices, all of which so angered them that they wished to destroy Him, and did form a mob and take Him to the precipice back of the town for that purpose. Such revulsion of feeling, such rage, such willingness to destroy Him can mean nothing short of their understanding Him to claim, and their resenting His claim of Messiahship and of an authority in interpreting the character and work of the Messiah such as ignored all established authority and convention. They would destroy Him as an arrogant blasphemer. The universal note in His program would be the climax of offense.

When John the Baptist from his prison sent to inquire of Jesus: "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" Jesus sent, for reply, the story of what He was engaged in doing, and closed with the words: "And blessed is he whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me." John had been convinced that Jesus was the promised Messiah. But Jesus' ministry was not so stern nor marked with such judgments as John's ideas expected. Hence his inquiry. Jesus evidently intends to say that He is the Messiah, and encourages John not to be disappointed in Him because John's stern judgments are not being executed by Him. After John's messengers are gone Jesus talks about him in praise and appreciation. He says of him: "This is he of whom it is written: 'Behold I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before

thee.'" But Jesus could not affirm that John was the forerunner of the Messiah without claiming that He was Himself that Messiah. In it all there is the assertion by Jesus of His right to interpret His function even in the face of John's disappointed expectations.

In the Old Testament Jesus found two aspects of the Messianic hope so different as easily to seem diverse and inconsistent. One stressed the material, political and economic prosperity and the influence and glory of Israel among the nations, usually grounding this on religious loyalty to Jehovah and including righteous and fraternal dealing both within the nation and with the nations. The other aspect emphasized holiness and truth; recognized the need for repentance, forgiveness, redemption, righteousness, was spiritual and transcended all racial lines. This latter ideal placed great importance on personal leadership and influence and made the "Servant of Jehovah" a sacrificial, atoning Savior of His own people and of other peoples as well. The first pledged to Israel glory and honor, the second placed on Israel moral and religious obligation and challenged them to extending the blessings of their religious and ethical ideals.

Jesus is in nothing more remarkable than in His choosing the ethical, religious, universal Messianic type and forming His plan for His personal ministry and His program for the Kingdom of God, which He made all-important, on the basis of service and sacrifice. He would be the "Suffering Servant of Jehovah" "to redeem

Israel and to be God's salvation to the ends of the earth." Hence His program was always aiming at inclusiveness, expansion, comprehensiveness, which met in the Jews a spirit of exclusiveness, self-assertion and differentiation. He precipitated that difference and conflict here in the Nazareth sermon with the peasantry. This difference will extend and deepen among all classes until the conflict of these two ideals will reach the climax in the cross and Jesus will stake the decision of God on His power to overcome death imposed by the opposition.

It would be quite impossible here to cite the numerous examples of this appropriation by Jesus of these spiritually Messianic teachings in the Old Testament. One or more of them is readily seen to underlie each crisis in the development of His ministry and each of His strategic teachings. He quotes them on most such occasions. His interpreters, in the Gospels, follow His example and apply them to Him in their records. Here is one of the outstanding features of the Gospel story.

2. There are two important features in the Messianic description and claim in the Sermon. The first is the "anointing of Jehovah" for the function of Messiah. Its significance lies in two directions: it gives authority for His function, and it provides equipment and divine coöperation in His work. "No man taketh the honor unto himself, but when he is called of God" (Heb. 5:4). Jesus never tires of the idea that He is "sent" by His Father, that He is doing His Father's works, speaking His Father's words. This He

does "always"; it is His "food"; "the Son can of Himself do nothing." It is needless to multiply the statements. The Gospels abound in them, just as the idea that the Messiah was to be sent by Jehovah runs through all the Old Testament. The power of Jesus in great measure lay in just this unfailing conviction that He was "under authority."

But it was His claim also that "the promise of His Father" that the Holy Spirit should be with Him was realized in His ministry. Besides the words from which Jesus spoke in Nazareth we find the same assurance in Isa. 11:2: "And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah"; in Isa. 42:1: "Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon Him: He will bring forth justice to the nations"; in Isa. 48:16: "and now the Lord Jehovah hath sent me and His Spirit"; in Isa. 59:20 f.: "And a redeemer will come to Zion . . . and this is My covenant with them, saith Jehovah; My Spirit which is upon Thee, and My words which I have put in Thy mouth shall not depart out of Thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of Thy seed, nor out of the mouth of Thy seed's seed, saith Jehovah, from henceforth and forever."

That Jesus worked in the consciousness of this association with the Holy Spirit and in reliance upon Him is manifest from numerous references in His speech. We have seen already how the Holy Spirit came at His baptism "to abide upon

Him"; and that it was under the control of the Spirit that He went into the forty days of temptation, and in the Spirit's power that He came to Galilee to take up His ministry. It was "by the Spirit of God" that He cast out demons (Matt. 12:28). He made His plans for the future of His Gospel and "gave commandment through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles whom He had chosen" (Acts 1: 2-5) in the assurance that the Holy Spirit would unite with His apostles in witness to Him and in carrying out His program. All this is set out with irresistible force in the Upper Room Talk—John 14-16. This linking Himself up with God and with God's Holy Spirit is one of the unmistakable and inescapable characteristics of Jesus.

3. The other impressive feature of the prophetic description of the Christ which Jesus appropriates, to identify Himself, is in the nature of His work.

That work was, first of all, characterized by its interest in the poor, the broken-hearted, captives and prisoners, mourners and all in distress—descriptions which recall to our minds at once the seventy-second psalm and the Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount, as also the description of His labors which Jesus commanded the messengers of John the Baptist to report to him. The nature of Jesus' interpretation of this section of the prophetic word is indicated by the impression on the audience in the synagogue: "And all bare witness, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of His mouth."

A second item in the Isaiah passage was that a new era in God's redemptive dealing with men was inaugurated by the coming of the Messiah. He was anointed "to proclaim the year of Jehovah's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God." This was an idea emphasized in other sections of prophecy, e.g. Isa. 49:8 (quoted by Paul in 2 Cor. 6:2). It was probably this claim of inaugurating a new era that first angered the audience, especially if He included the element of vengeance coupled with the idea of God's favor. (Cf. also such passages as 2:12, 13:6, 34:2, 8.) It is in accord with this idea of God's favor that the Isaiah passage in the last paragraph makes the Messiah rejoice in soul because He is "clothed with the garments of salvation" and "robed in righteousness."

A third item was the universalism of the work of the Christ through whom "the Lord Jehovah will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations." The Christ is essentially of and for the human race. This necessity is part of the positive teaching, abundantly urged in the Old Testament, but wholly neglected in its deeper and vital aspects by the scribes of Jesus' time. It is one of the marks of His insight, of His "keen scent for God" and His perfect human sympathy, that He received and emphasized this aspect of Messiahship. For Him there were no barriers of race, religion, culture, tradition, language. He "came to save the world." From the beginning He was the embodiment of the thought and program that "God so loved the world that He gave

His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life."

Gathering out all the factors in the Messianic ideal that were spiritual, universal, sacrificial, He made them the ground plan of His life and aim. Thus would He reinterpret and realize "the Hope of Israel."

CHAPTER V

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT—JESUS DECLARES HIS IDEALS FOR KINGDOM MEN (*Matt.* 4:25-8:1)

Probably somewhat more than a year after His baptism and some months after the Nazareth Discourse Jesus takes a new step in His ministry. It is not necessary to suppose that all the material assembled in the Matthew section was spoken at one time. The weight of critical scholarship is against that view. Yet one ought not to overlook the unity and progress of the material, nor the pertinency of all of it to the occasion. The fact that some of the matter here recorded is, in other Gospels, assigned to other occasions would leave open the question of which is the accurate account, but quite obviously with the presumption against Matthew. Against that presumption we must still place the probability—the practical certainty—that Jesus, like every teacher, would give His vital and organic teaching more than once and under varying circumstances. Whether it was given entire, at the time of the choice of the Twelve (as Luke, see below), or whether it represents Matthew's assembling into unity materials from various occasions, there is evident fitness in seeking to understand the aim and outline of

this, the world's most famous and influential "Discourse."

There was abundant reason for the Sermon.

1. It has become urgently important that Jesus define His ideals and objectives. His ministry has become famous, never another so famous. Before the imprisonment of John the Baptist, some months earlier than this sermon, Jesus was "making and baptizing more disciples than John" and that Great-heart had rejoiced to see his "Bridegroom-friend" "increasing" while his own standing "decreased." The "great Galilean ministry" has stimulated an enthusiastic popularity more embarrassing than gratifying, certainly raising many problems. Matthew's summary statement (4:23-25) enables us to appreciate the situation facing Jesus: "Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the Good Tidings of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people. And His reputation went abroad into the whole of Syria, and they brought to Him all those who were sick with various diseases and stricken with ills, demoniacs, epileptics and paralytics and He healed them. And there were following Him multitudinous crowds from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and Transjordania." Most of these numerous followers had but hazy notions of what He might mean to them. Such ideas as they had were apt to be more than half erroneous.

For all who might be accounted "followers," whether genuine or only *quasi* disciples, it was de-

sirable that there be some clearing of their ideas. Jesus is asking men to follow Him. He must tell them whither and where He is leading.

Then there were religious teachers, jealous and puzzled, for whom some defining word would be of use. The Jewish religious organization provided for the proper training and authorization of rabbis, scribes and synagogue rulers. Jesus held no certificate of any rabbinical school, no authorizing commission. Yet here He was teaching more people than all the rabbis and instructing more than all the scribes. Long ago they had provided from Jerusalem committees to watch His work and censor His words. He was quite too much for them either to control or to comprehend with their minds grooved to conventionalism and limited by "the traditions of the elders." Jesus will have a word for these jealous guardians of orthodoxy and regularity, these enemies of His freedom and directness.

2. The time has come for some definite organization of the results of His work. He has simply "gone about doing good," teaching, healing, arousing, stimulating. He has seemed strangely careless of system. He has had almost no organization. A few men have attached themselves to Him, responding to His attraction and to His invitation. They have accompanied Him on His tours and aided Him in many ways. Now the time has come to make some beginning of definite organization. He will have Twelve who accept His headship and whom He may send out on such missions as His plans call for. All His future

plans call for such organizations. He must begin definite training of these helpers—"Apostles" He will call them. He must induct them into His plans and program. There would be many possibilities from whom to make the choice. From Luke (6:12 ff.) we learn that "He went out into the mountain to pray; and He continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day He called His disciples; and He chose from them twelve whom also He named apostles." We are to think of Him as canvassing in that all-night conference with the Father numerous names. He could go over the qualities of the possibilities, considering each man in the light of His plans and of what He could hope to make of each one. They were not a very promising lot at best. They were to be of the very greatest importance to all that He is in the world for.

When He came down in the morning He called them one by one from out the group of "disciples." By this time the multitudes were eagerly surging up the mountain and there on a "level place," on a bench of the mountain, in the presence of the multitudes Jesus spoke at length, primarily to the newly designated Twelve, but also to all His followers and, consciously, to all the throng.

3. He is outlining and discussing for them His Ideals for Men of the Kingdom of Heaven which He is preaching, inaugurating, projecting. It is important that we try to get just the topic He places before us here. He is not defining or describing the nature of the Kingdom as a whole;

not discussing the problems or the prospects, the methods or the growth or the consummation of the Kingdom. Of these He has some words—mainly in parables—on many occasions. Here He confines Himself to the characteristics which He desires, expects, and will cultivate in Kingdom folk. He is telling them what sort He will make of us and what He will do with us in His Kingdom if we permit Him to have His way with us. No better topic for this suggests itself than *Jesus' Ideals for the People of the Kingdom of Heaven.*

These ideals we shall undertake to outline in seven topics, which seem to follow the logic of the Sermon as we find it.

(1) He begins with the qualities of Kingdom men (5:3-12). Longing earnestly to do all possible for men, with a boundless compassion for them as He has come to know them, He is about to speak now His first great wish for His people, for all people. He is very conscious of their unhappiness. They are politically distressed by their humiliating subjection to the Roman Imperium. They are economically distressed by the hard conditions under which for most life is a bitter fight and struggle for poor maintenance. Religiously they are disappointed in the long deferred hope of Jehovah's deliverance. What shall He say to them on this, the most important occasion on which He has yet spoken.

He opened His mouth and taught them, saying "Blessed." When we think of the meaning of the word it must strike us with a shock. The author well remembers how this word rose up and

smote him with startling force as He read it in the Greek some years ago. "Blessed!" Over and over He repeats it. He wishes men to be "happy" in the highest sense of that word. And He tells them the qualities of soul, the characteristics of spirit that go to make the man who is rightly to be congratulated. There is no need here to consider the Beatitudes in detail.

Attention is called to the fact that they all fall into two classes: First those which describe what one is in his true, inward self; what his deep longings and desires; what his way of thinking of himself and life. Then what one is in his attitude to the human, world environment in which he finds himself; what one is trying to do for men. In the first group it is "the poor in spirit," "the hungry soul craving righteousness," "the meek," "the pure in heart." In the second group we find the "happy" man trying to make peace in a warring social order, bestowing mercy on evil and suffering fellow-men. How strange all this description seemed that day in Palestine. Alas, how strange it all seems this day in America. Nothing of position, all of disposition. Nothing of how people and circumstance are treating you and behaving toward you. It is all turning upon what you are doing, and fitted to do, to others; how you are reacting to an unsatisfactory, even an oppressive, environment. The one exception to this is the beatitude on the persecuted man, provided it truly is persecution, not punishment, that it is for the sake of righteousness and for the sake of Christ Jesus. In that case one is to be

hilariously glad; "For great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you."

Why are such men to be congratulated, why are they happy, why to be accounted fortunate? Because they have ideals, they are aware of their limitations, their needs; they are dissatisfied with themselves and with their world, dissatisfied in a holy discontent, and so they are open for God to come in and use them for higher things, they have become prophets for Him.

(2) It is in this last "beatitude" that we make transition to the second point of the Sermon: the Function of Kingdom Men (5:12-16). Jesus is now speaking of the use He wishes to make of those who come in with Him. What is it He is calling them to be and to do by being? He says it in three ways. "Blessed are ye when men shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. So persecuted they the prophets that were before *you.*" The emphasis is on *you* and on the connection with Jesus, "for my sake." Jesus proposes to make prophets of His people. And it is when our message becomes so much that of Jesus that men who would spurn and slander and persecute Him turn upon us "for His sake" that we are subjects of His "blessed." Of course a prophet is not primarily one who predicts. Usually he does not foretell. Always he is God's spokesman to his own time. He discerns and interprets God in the present life and order. He tells what God's thought is about men's conduct, ways of living, society, government, religion,

theology. He may foretell God's course and its outcome in men. Such was Jesus; such He will make of His workers. If we are like Him and speaking for Him men whose ideas, conduct and plans are rebuked and who are yet unwilling to correct their ways will turn on us, as they turned on Him. The world needs prophets. Jesus says when your message has so become Mine that men resent it and persecute you you have become prophets.

The world has always persecuted its prophets. It does so still. Every generation kills its own prophets while it builds memorials to the prophets of former generations.

"Ye are the salt of the earth." Thus, in a new figure, Jesus restates the function of Kingdom folk. God wishes to use you to save His world. It has in it elements of corruption, decay, death. The salt arrests these processes; and also stimulates and strengthens the forces of life. The salt must lose itself in this saving process. Unless Christ's people are used to save God's world, how shall He save it?

Once more Jesus says it: "Ye are the light of the world." To that end they must seek the highest purity and the most advantageous position for doing this great service. Like the city on the hill, like the lamp on the lamp-stand, "even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven." Some one has called attention to the men, the class of men and the individuals, to whom Jesus first spoke these words, and to the amazing

boldness of such a statement. A group of peasants and fisher-folk, unlettered and with no reputation or standing; men of a small, haughty, exclusive, hating and hated race. Yet His words have been marvelously verified. Their light has illuminated the world; they have rebuked the sins of the whole human race, they have saved the world from self-destruction. Truly "the saints rule the earth" in the only worthy sense of ruling the world—that they determine its direction and its destiny. Jesus makes the call to each generation of His people. We must be for Him and for humanity prophets, salt, light, at all cost, in all humility, in all wisdom, in all abandon—we must.

(3) Next Jesus takes up the moral and ethical standards for Kingdom folks. He discusses this at greater length than any other single item. Here is where we are most apt to temporize and compromise, to ease up on ourselves. Yet this is the first urgency for God's prophets if they will light and save the world.

There were two classes before Him to whom Jesus must say a clear word on this point, besides His call to His special representatives. The formal leaders and guardians of the Jewish religion and social organization—the elders, scribes and Pharisees—were not only jealous and vexed with this upstart, unauthorized Teacher who had gained such unprecedented influence and following. They were frankly uneasy about the foundations and structure of their social organism. He ignores convention and flouts tradition. He worships freely and regularly in their synagogues

and visits the temple; yet He finds God as freely and as readily in the field, on the highway, in the byway, in the market, in the slum. His only recognition of the always persistent distinction between good and religious people on the one hand and "publicans and sinners" on the other seems to be in a sort of favoritism for the bad class, while yet no stain of badness attaches to Him. If this goes on what is to become of the structure, even the very foundations of religion and of social ethics, of society itself? He is taking "the law and the prophets" in His own hands and ignores all the authoritative interpretations of them so laboriously built up through generations of pious scholarship. With it all Jesus is teaching and preaching to more people than can ever on a Sabbath be found in all the synagogues. The situation seems serious. Jesus addresses Himself to this alarm: "Do not worry about Me and what I may do to your law. I came not to pull down law or prophets, but to complete both. They mean more to Me than the whole physical universe—'heaven and earth': all is to be accomplished. Any teacher in the Kingdom which I am preaching who disregards one of the least commandments of the law and prophets, in his own behavior and in his teaching, shall be accounted the smallest man in that Kingdom."

But there was danger from another direction. The "unchurched multitudes"—an abominable term—had turned with the eagerness of a new hope to this open-air, open-souled Preacher. The superficial religious standards, the endless round

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of ceremonial, the exacting regulations of the minutiæ of daily routine were for many too heavy a burden to win the standing of "the righteous." They found the grind of hard conditions already too much for them to make ends meet in food and clothing, and could not find time or energy to be "good." And the synagogue sermons didn't usually find the soul in its real needs. Many had given over all effort to be "religious" and accepted their classification among "publicans and sinners." But Jesus had come to them with "a God so nigh unto them" in field and in forum, looking up at them from the flowers of the field, speaking to them in the winds and waving grain; a God who loves and cares and is always near. He talked and lived as if for Him, and for them, God was as present in daily conditions and life as in synagogue on the Sabbath or in temple at Passover and Atonement Day. Surely the God of Jesus could not be exacting of poor, frail humanity. It would not really matter much with Him about their transgressions and sins.

Jesus must guard against the notion that He does not regard righteousness as secondary in His kingdom plans. It is breath-taking to hear Him say now, "I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." It is as if He said: "Unless you are better than the theological teachers and the guardians of orthodoxy demand, and are, there is no place for you in My following."

Such a drastic word needs explanation. He

gives it in concrete examples, selecting for this purpose outstanding commands and the corresponding sins, murder, adultery, false swearing, retaliation, unneighborliness. In each case He states the orthodox teaching of the day, as sustained by the ancient scriptures, and then proclaims His own injunction. We need not follow out the contrasts in detail. In each case He goes to the root of the sin, in the heart motive, the initial thought out of which action grows. And He repudiates all compromise, all shrewd evasion. The "doctors of the law" laid down stern commands, applying them only to open act, not to producing attitude; then cunningly devised ways of evading the guilt of violation. It is a common trick of human nature not easy to root out of even the Christian soul.

Murder was prohibited. For them murder meant the actual slaying of a man. Jesus said that murder exists in any soul that harbors hatred of another human being. Thus He located murder, and every other sin, in the seed of thought, not the fruit of deed. His teaching was too searching for even the Christian conscience, and some scribe in copying introduced a modifying phrase which gained wide acceptance and is still found in our King James version, but no longer in any of the revised versions. The scribe added "without a cause." But Jesus admitted no cause for hatred that could take out of it the taint and the guilt of murder.

The scribes interpreted "Thou shalt not commit adultery" of the act; Jesus finds the sin in

the look of lust, and finds no provision for divorce in the ideal of His Father.

False swearing was clearly an iniquity, but the scribes graded oaths so that one might swear by the earth and lapse if only his heaven-bound oath were inviolate, or might absolve himself from an oath by the altar of sacrifice if he kept the assertion sealed by the offering on the altar. Jesus swept aside all refuge of lies and bade a man understand that God is witness to every word he utters, so that "yes" and "no" are in every case pledged by all a man's character and religion.

So long as retaliation is measured by exact and just equivalence Moses' law seemed to be satisfied. Under this interpretation Shylock might have his sixteen ounces of flesh if the scales balanced exactly, but Jesus not only goes beyond all retaliation, but in the place of all anti-social and unsocial motivation puts love for the enemy expressing itself in service.

Thus He rises to the transcendent standard which He states with bold, bald simplicity: "Ye therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." He is quoting Moses (Lev. 19:2), but He is also quoting God and He transfers a command from the ceremonial, religious realm, in which Moses placed it, to the vital, social sphere which must be all sacred to the man who goes with Jesus Christ.

Fifteen years ago a father was studying this passage while his little boy lay near on the floor. Both were to have the same passage in the Sunday school classes the next Sunday. The father

read this verse and said: "George, do you know what that means?" George shook his head. The father said, "Jesus says He wants us to be as good as God is." The boy turned his face upward, opened wide a pair of blue eyes and whistled, "W-h-e-w! I couldn't ever be as good as that!" The father said: "No, we can't be as good as that, but isn't it great that Jesus wants us to be like God." Could we follow Jesus as we do if He had for us any lower standard of morals and ethics than perfection, if He could be content until He has made us true sons and daughters of His perfect Father?" It is good to link this ideal of Jesus with God's word, through Paul in Rom. 8:29: "Whom He did foreknow them He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be [only] the first-born among many brothers." Jesus wants us to be like His Father. The Father wants us to be like His Son. "Beloved, now are we God's children, and it is not yet made clear what we shall be. We know that if it shall be made clear we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every one that has this hope over him purifies himself just as that One is pure" (I John 3:2 ff.).

(4) Jesus comes now to speak of the religion of the Kingdom man, of His relation to God and communion with Him (6:1-18). About this He has just one word to say: Be honest. It is surprising until we think of it. Do we say: "Why, of course one is honest in worship"? Probably nowhere else is it so easy for us to deceive ourselves. Hence Jesus searches us out at just this

point. "Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men to be seen of them: else ye have no reward with your Father who is in heaven." "Be honest with God." That is all; that is *all*. It is a remarkable thing that the Sermon on the Mount has no word in it about honesty among men. If one is truly honest with God he will be honest in every human relation. And he will be more than honest. This more-than-honest ideal Jesus urges throughout. Only by being more than honest can we build God's Kingdom. Only let us never make the mistake of thinking that if we are generous and brotherly we may omit punctilious care to be honest. No dishonest man can be honestly generous.

Jesus illustrated His call to sincerity in religion by the three characteristic religious acts: almsgiving, praying, fasting. In each He warns against hypocrisy, ostentation, desire for human observation and recognition. It must be wholly and exclusively for God if it is to be truly worship of God. The chief emphasis is here, of course, on prayer. There is the "holy of holies" for worship. In "the holy place" one may give, and in the courts of the soul's temple fasting and other works of worship find place. But when one prays it is very personal, very individual. One goes into the Most Holy Place for prayer. Jesus drops the plural "ye" with which He came up to the prayer experience, and counsels the individual, "thou." One is to go into his private closet and shut the door, and there himself alone with God make known his requests. It is a very

solemn, searching situation in which Jesus places the soul. No wonder the prayer is so unusual which Jesus suggests. It is very simple, and very comprehensive, very brief, but wide-reaching, and absolutely unselfish. It is truly the prayer of a Kingdom soul.

Jesus suggests the attitude of the soul toward God, and indirectly toward men: "Father of us, who art in heaven." Then one supreme objective stated in three terms: "Thy name be hallowed," "Thy Kingdom come"; "Thy will on earth as in heaven." At last the requests for a man thus related to God, thus consumed with the passion for God to be honored on earth, completely. All purely private needs seem to be forgotten. The pray-er desires only food, forgiveness, protection from the evil one, while he gives himself up to Kingdom service.

(5) Naturally the thought moves next to emphasis on the controlling objective of life for one who is in the Kingdom of Heaven (6:19-34).

Running through the whole paragraph is the necessity for having one single objective. Divided loyalties dissipate the energies, nullify power, harass the soul, obscure the vision. Just as lack of focus of the eyes gives one two retinal pictures with confusion and darkness, so lack of concentrating spiritual insight leaves the soul in confusion and groping. "And if the inner light be darkness how terrible is that darkness" (v. 23). "No man can serve two masters." Thus Jesus makes His plea for placing the treasure to be sought where the heart should be.

He points out two persistent, dangerous rivals to the true objective that should command our undivided devotion and effort: treasure getting and anxious worry over daily needs and bodily desires. He points out the folly and futility and the essential heathenism of being led away after these rivals. They destroy faith and minister to irreligion. "After all these things the heathen seek."

Thus He comes to state the true objective that is to command and direct all our energies of prayer, longing, effort: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness." If we do this we shall never lack for mere "things," never really lack as God sees need, for "your heavenly Father knows ye have need of all these things" which accordingly "shall be added unto you." Occupied always "first" with God's Kingdom interests and trusting Him as your Father you will never "borrow trouble" knowing that "enough for to-day is its own needs."

(6) Instead of thinking of the matter in Matt. VII as a lot of miscellaneous material loosely thrown together let us seek some unity and harmony. Do not verses 1-12 set before us the Social Rule for Kingdom People?

We began with a necessary warning against a wrong attitude toward other people and especially against thus prostituting to hurtful uses, instead of helpful ends, the powers of discriminating judgment. Man's personality nowhere rises higher than in the fine use of his powers of distinction and judgment. But it is a very danger-

ous power. We are constantly tempted to use it in censorious criticisms, captious cavilings, haughty contempts, cynical sneers. These are the dogs and swine that trample and devour these holy gifts of noble personality, these pearls of rational being. By the rhetorical figure called *chiasm,* from the Greek letter χ Jesus places the extremes and means of a four-term simile in the arrangement of verse 6. The swine trample the pearls, while the dogs devour the holy things. Thus a man loses his capacity for clear thinking and honest dealing. He is cartooned by Jesus as going about offering his services to take splinters out of his neighbors' eyes while a stake protrudes from his own eye.

Jesus next sets out that relation to God and His resources which will place a man in position and give him the disposition to keep the Golden Rule. If one is living for God's Kingdom as urged in chapter VI, and if he thinks of himself as God's "prophet," "salt" and "light," then he has such access to God that he can ask and receive whatever God's interests in any case may require, he can seek wisdom or supplies and find them, he can knock at God's treasure house and the door will open for him.

With this preparation and approach Jesus is ready to announce the Golden Rule of the Kingdom of Heaven: "All things, therefore"—it is this *"therefore"* that gives us the clew to the entire paragraph, and that shows us how it becomes possible for one to make the rule of Jesus the guide to his social conduct. A man thus re-

lated to God can, and can afford to, do unto other men whatsoever he would wish done to himself under the same circumstances, if he looked upon the situation from God's viewpoint.

(7) The last paragraph of the Sermon carries four Warnings to the Men of the Kingdom (7:13-27).

The way of Jesus is not easy. It cannot be entered without taking pains, nor traveled without caution and effort. One must be prepared to go against convention and custom, and to walk apart from the throng. One must be willing to be different, and must determine his course on principle and not "go with a multitude to do evil."

Then, too, it will be needful to guard against false teachers. There will always be those who would mislead simple souls seeking to be good and godly. Teachers and leaders must be tested, and followed only if their fruits approve their doctrines. This simple pragmatic test is for the many well-intentioned the best practical way of selecting leaders.

And we must know that we are all to face the Lord and be finally tested by His perfect insight. Thus indirectly Jesus here sets Himself up as the Judge of our lives, our motives, our work. We must not deceive ourselves. We may even "in His name" "do many mighty works" without really being His. He may deny all favorable knowledge of us. Here is call for present self-searching in His clear light.

With an audacity sublime in its simplicity Jesus tells us, at length, that the outcome of all one's

life, one's destiny will turn on his acceptance or rejection of these ideals which He has stated for us. He who accepts and builds on this foundation will have a house that endures unto eternity. It will "have survival value" and so will stand all the forces of ruin. He who neglects and rejects the counsel of Christ Jesus will find all his life-building tumbling upon him in terrible destruction. His house of character, achievement, accumulation may be small or great. It is all that a man has; and if it fall "great is the fall thereof."

The Sermon is done. What impression does it make? What is its response in us? "The multitudes were astonished at His teaching: for He taught them as having authority, and not as their scribes." What was the nature of the "authority" that so impressed them, and that continues century by century to impress every generation? Surely not an external authority of the orthodox theologian and of the dogma of religious councils. That was exactly the sort of "authority" the scribes were always relying on and enforcing. Jesus' authority was impressive by contrast. They cited Rabbi Hillel and Rabbi Juda, and Rabbi Simon and "the Great Synagogue," tracing their tradition back through centuries. So the rabbis still teach and seek to impose the "authority" of their creeds. Jesus astonished by another method. His "I say unto you" was not the assertion of another external authority to be accepted as either master or guide to a man's conscience in such a way as to leave him free from re-

sponsibility for moral decisions or bound by superior dominance. The Greek word helps us, because it exactly describes the situation before us. The word—*οὐσια*—means the out-giving-of-being. It is the authority of fundamental, essential truth and reality. Something in each man rises up at the words of Jesus to approve them. One knows at once that Jesus is speaking the deepest truth, uncovering God's will before his heart's eyes. If I do not approve what He tells me to be and do I know that I condemn myself in disapproving. He has spoken to my deepest soul. He has searched out my hidden parts. I know He is right. "Never man spake like this man." He has handled Moses with great freedom and has boldly given me new interpretations of God's Word, and has spoken new words of God to me. And my soul says, "Amen." I know He has spoken what I ought to approve and to do. His is the authority of reality. Will I accept it? Will I follow on? One is glad that Matthew adds (8:1, unfortunately cut off by the chapter division) that "when He came down from the mountain great multitudes followed Him." Humbly let me join that throng, and press on each of us to be one in the Kingdom of His God.

CHAPTER VI

IN A SOLILOQUY JESUS ASSUMES THE MORAL BURDEN OF THE HUMAN RACE (*Matt.* 11:20-30)

After the Sermon on the Mount and with His organized apostolate Jesus entered upon a year of intensive popular ministry, continuing the lines of work which had won this great following and led up to the Sermon and the organization. Most of this ministry was in Galilee, but with a significant trip to Jerusalem. There was no abatement in His popularity. Wherever He went He was thronged. At times there was no opportunity for eating in any quiet or privacy. By numerous incidental remarks the Evangelists indicate for us the multitudinous and frequently tumultuous pressure under which the Master "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil" (Peter—Acts 10:38).

Twelve months before the crucifixion Jesus took a new turn in His work. To the populace and to His "disciples," as well as even to His apostles, it was a strange, inexplicable, disappointing course upon which He now entered. He withdrew for most of the time, so far as it was possible for Him to get away from crowds. He devoted Himself to teaching the Twelve. This is recognized by almost all students as a distinct period or division of the ministry of the Master. Those who

take a low view of Him fancy that He now saw that it was hopeless to gain acceptance as Messiah —at least on any terms of Messiahship which His conscience would permit Him to accept; and that He shrewdly changed His tactics and rescued His ministry and message from failure by a sort of esoteric organization into which He brought, and was able to hold, a relatively small group of His more spiritual and more intimately attached following. All this notion fits badly into the picture of Jesus and His ministry in the Gospels and flatly contradicts their interpretation of Him.

Certain it is, however, that He did, with purpose and persistence, in this last year, seek to avoid and evade the crowds, postpone until He was ready for it the fatal issue with His enemies, and give Himself with great skill and patience to what the late A. B. Bruce has so well styled "The Training of the Twelve," in the title to a book which is the classic among many discussions of this important phase of the work of Jesus. If He would leave any abiding result of His life and labor, especially if He would project Himself and His "Glad Tidings," His rescuing love, into the growth and destiny of mankind, He must give special instructions, special training, special spiritual insight and equipment to this inner circle of followers.

It was by no means easy to get away from the populace. It was almost impossible and frequently wholly impossible, so that we find many instances and incidents in this last year where the multitudes are with Him. This was a desirable,

a necessary, part of His work still. With the Twelve He withdrew hither and thither, seeking the needed privacy, once getting entirely outside Palestine in the Syrian country toward Tyre and Sidon.

In the passage now before us we seem to catch Jesus just at this turning point in His method and in His plan. To be sure Luke locates it just at the return of the Seventy whom Jesus sent out on a tour representing Him (Luke 10:13 ff.), and the harmonists locate this sending of the Seventy well within the final year of the ministry. But such a locating of this phase of the work is out of harmony with the spirit, the movement and the general course of the facts. Both Luke and Matthew represent the soliloquy which we are now to study as following directly upon the "upbraiding of the cities wherein most of His mighty works had been done, because they repented not."

Jesus is frankly facing relative failure in His preaching of the Kingdom of Heaven to the people. Not that we are to suppose He was surprised, and in that sense disappointed. The actual fact and experience of failure is, however, upon Him; and there is no prescience or preparation that can take away the grief and sting of failure to do the good to people to which one had devoted all his energy.

We have seen that Jesus had prepared Himself for such failure from the beginning. Besides His own insight, His Isa. XLIX would have led Him to see the course of His reception by the people, as would the whole tenor of those scriptures which

He had manifestly chosen as guides in understanding and discharging His functions.

Yet few would have agreed with Him that He was failing—probably not one would have agreed. He had never been more popular. Even after He begins to separate Himself from them the multitudes seek Him out on every opportunity, and after the feeding of the five thousand they are about to force upon Him the crown of the Kingdom. They are ready to risk all and follow Him in revolt against all authority, religious and political. His disciples—including the Twelve—would have been ready for such a move.

Therein appears His superior insight. Here was for Him the mark of His failure. The people were missing the point of His appeal. They wanted a bread King. They wanted His miracle personality to perform in miracles of provision and protection, deliverance and defense while unchanged in heart and life they would enjoy a physical, a material Messianic reign. How it all wrung His soul and drove Him to prayer. He was calling them to repentance, they wished to follow Him to power. He wanted to get God into them, they wanted to get Him and God into their service. His soul is wrung with deep anguish because of their deep need of repentance and their persistent unrepentance. He has tried so hard, so faithfully, so unselfishly, so perfectly tried to give them God, and they haven't seen it. Every devoted worker for men and with men knows a little of what that grief and disappointment mean. Yet Jesus will not

give up. "He will not fail." He must find a way. He must save. We catch Him just as He is facing this problem of reaching and redeeming such a people as these of Capernaum and Chorazin and Bethsaida: such as all men, for we are all the same. We do make it so very difficult for Jesus Christ to save us, so desperately hard. "With what anguish and loss" must Jesus "go to the cross," and "carry our sins with Him there."

He is here (verses 25-30) in a soliloquy. He is "talking to Himself." Matthew says, "He answered and said"; but no man and no word is named for Him to answer. No, it is a situation which He is answering. He is talking to Himself. But when a wise man talks to himself he talks to God—he prays, and Jesus was never more truly in prayer than in this soliloquy. Let us draw near and listen, and try to interpret His consciousness in this critical, sacred hour.

We can readily mark three stages of His consciousness.

1. His first expression is thankful acceptance of the Father's will and plan (verse 25). It is with Him no mere falling back on God's comprehensive will to sustain Himself while He submits to the inevitable, an experience with which we are all so familiar. Such submission is an attitude of piety and reverence, and one that saves us from despair, and rescues us from despondency, and saves us for some new endeavor. But Jesus goes far beyond this. He is not surrendering to the inevitable. He is accepting His experience and His task with all its difficulties and all its heartaches,

and accepting it gladly. It is one thing to submit to God's will in helpless surrender. It is a wholly different thing to accept God's will as our way and find His plan our task and our delight. It is very difficult for us, but very blessed and meaningful if

> In hours of pain and grief
> We learn in Him unfaltering faith and trust,
> Obey because we will and not because we must.

In the face of the situation, fully apprehended, Jesus says: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in Thy sight." The word for "I thank Thee" is more than acceptance, more than just gratitude. It is ἐξομολογοῦμαι, which means I give out the expression of an inward agreement. He is wholly at one with His Father.

For one thing, the work has not wholly failed. Child-hearted souls have seen and accepted. Those who are wise in their own conceits and proud of their own understanding have not seen. But humble minds, conscious of spiritual ignorance and religious need, have understood. Something has been gained, some are saved and linked with Him.

And such is the true method for transforming humanity. Only with those open to the leadership of the Teacher is teaching possible. We are all too apt to seek especially to make the Christ

and His plan acceptable to the learned leaders, and by shifting the emphasis from "the form of healthful teaching" to make easier the acceptance of a weakened gospel. In matters of the spirit and of the Kingdom of God the physician can heal only the sick, the Master can instruct only the consciously ignorant. Recall the Beatitudes. The hope of the Christ lies with those who have the qualities therein portrayed. Pilate was a higher type, as men reckon, than Peter, but Jesus could carry Peter spiritual leagues beyond Pilate. Caiaphas was a far superior man to Levi, but the publican could become an apostle to all ages because he could "leave all and follow Jesus," while poor Pilate leaves a memorial to intellectual and moral cowardice in the Swiss mountain (Pilatus) where he committed suicide.

In various mission fields just now one finds a feverish anxiety to win "the men of influence," to capture "the leaders" and "the makers of the new China," "the new India," "the new Japan." And that is well if they are "captured," but there is much danger of missing the way of the Master when we make distinctions between "coolies" and "returned students" and devote larger means and "abler" men to minister to the cultured.

Jesus has all through the centuries made far more leaders than He has captured. We do not forget Saul of Tarsus and Francis of Assisi and Alfred Wallace. Still it remains that the door of the Kingdom is open for those who repent and become "as little children." Any man who can repent has the child heart. Such are the "sons

of the Kingdom" and in them is the foundation of success.

It was His Father's way. That was enough for Jesus. "Yea, Father, for thus it came about as satisfactory in Thy presence." What is God's pleasing way is our winning course.

2. We next see Jesus accepting the moral burden of the human race. The weight of the world's loss and need rests upon Him (verse 27): "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father." Here is no assertion of prerogative, no boast of position, no claim of preëminence—no claim at all, but a solemn bending beneath the tremendous weight of a lost humanity. He has just seen men, under the finest possible opportunities and the most winning persuasion, turn away from the call of God. "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one after his own way," even while the Good Shepherd stood among us and called, "and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." The "woe" of Capernaum's unrepentance has become the burden of the Son of God. "The government is upon His shoulders," and the mark of it is not in the epaulettes of empire, but in bloody stripes by which we are healed. It is when men have astonished God (see Isa. 59:15-24) with their wickedness and impenitence of heart that the Redeemer must come to Zion. In the same spirit the Christ will speak in "the Great Commission" of His "authority in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18-20), by reason of which He must undertake the teaching of all the nations. His "authority

over all flesh" (John 17:2) meant responsibility for all men, in their sins, their deadness, their need of redemption.

No wonder we hear from Him a cry of isolation and loneliness: "No one knoweth the Son save the Father." He was not appreciated nor understood by any single soul. None shared His burden. He must "tread the wine-press alone." He has found no single soul that can know how He feels among sinners, nor share His burden.

The masses who have eagerly hung on His words readily grasped the blessings that fell from His mercy-miracled hands, enthusiastically glowed in the charm of His matchless personality, none of them have known what He meant when He talked of sin, of righteousness, of the Father's and His own glory tarnished on earth by the selfish practices of men.

And His own family: have not His mother and brothers twice come to drag Him away from the crowds and get Him back home for rest and for regaining His poise because they could not understand the zeal that consumed Him? And will not those brothers, a little later, grow so impatient of His notoriety and His pretensions that they will petulantly advise Him to go on to Jerusalem, in face of the determination there to put an end to Him, and announce His claims and see what comes of it? (John 7:1-9.)

He had multitudes of professed "disciples," but He had early found that He could not trust Himself to them because "He knew what was in

man" (John 2:23 ff.). And now, very shortly, many of His disciples will begin to turn back and no longer go about with Him (John 6:66). Even the Twelve will confess their disappointment; and not without care and skill will He hold them to the end. They have been with Him a long while without knowing Him. And this remaining year together will still leave them subject to Philip's rebuke at the last interview: "Have I been so long with you, and dost thou not know Me?" (John 14:9). There come times when all of us feel alone and misunderstood. Especially is this an experience of growing children, grappling with a strange wonder of themselves. Jesus is feeling this now. But it is not in self-pity, nor is it the misery of unappreciated pride. He must be understood in order to save, in order to build His Kingdom of love and life.

In the next words He reaches the climax of His eager longing: "Neither doth any one know the Father save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him." It is a thousand pities that men have paused at this point in the pouring out of His soul in an anguish of longing to make men know His Father—paused to build metaphysical theories in theology while the Redeemer's heart breaks with longing for lost men who will not heed. "This is eternal life," He will say in that final prayer at Gethsemane's gate, "that they should know Thee . . . and Jesus Christ as the one whom Thou hast sent." He is as far as possible from thinking of barring any from the Father. He is setting before Himself the

problem of how to get men to this knowledge that gives eternal life. It is the cry of the Savior, not the dogma of a theologian, that we hear from Him. He knows the Father; He is in a world in which He finds no man who knows Him; all men must know Him or they have missed the whole meaning of life, and had better never have been born.

Knowledge always brings responsibility in behalf of them that are ignorant. Position is always a liability, which we are constantly mistaking for an asset. Possession inevitably makes the possessor a steward. Jesus is giving expression to His sense of the stewardship of the knowledge of God as Father, and is feeling out for a means of imparting that knowledge to men. He must make them know His Father. How?

3. Here we enter upon the last stage of the soliloquy. He tells Himself the way out. Only thus do we get the meaning and force of the familiar words: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly of heart: and ye shall find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and My burden is light" (28-30).

Here is His method. He will carry on a school for teaching God to men, the Father God. With a far-away look in His eyes such of His men as were near must have seen Him as if sweeping the earth in His vision of love and longing. Then He lifted up His voice, quivering with a passion of invitation: "Hither unto Me, all ye toiling and burdened: I, on my part, will give you release." It

is a world call, a call to humanity, in the individual. The whole invitation is cast in the language of the teacher. That is the designation Jesus most loved. Master in the Gospels is always schoolmaster. He had read in one of His prophets Jehovah's lament: "My people perish for lack of knowledge," and had found in the prophets many an invitation that men come for learning. He knew that another name for Jehovah's Servant was "Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6). The Spirit of Jehovah resting upon Him would be manifest as "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of Jehovah." "His scent for God's fear would be keen" (Isa. 11:2 ff.).

When He comes to give the commission on the Mountain in Galilee, some time after His resurrection—that which it is the custom to designate "The Great Commission"—Jesus puts it in the terms of the school. "Go and make all the nations pupils," for *disciples* is just Latin for pupils. Jesus sends His followers out to enroll all men, who will, in His school. By baptizing them we put on a badge that proclaims them as students who are seeking to understand the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit "unto whom" they are baptized. Then Jesus commissions His followers to positions in His faculty, "teaching them to observe all things which I have commanded you." He pledges His continuous, supervising presence until the task is complete.

So in this soliloquy Jesus is thinking of Him-

self as the Teacher of mankind. "Take my yoke upon" was a bit of schoolboy slang to begin with, which, as so often happens with the schoolboy slang, got itself introduced into the recognized vocabulary. Boys then, as boys now, liked to pretend not to like their teachers, and to say hard things about them. So to matriculate was to "take the teacher's yoke" upon you. When Saul went away to Gamaliel's school his fellows might say he "had gone to take Old Gamaliel's yoke." The teacher yoked him up and drove him like an ox. After the manner of the Hebrew *parallelism* Jesus repeats the idea, with advance in meaning, by adding "and learn of me." Then He commends Himself as a teacher: "For I am meek and lowly of heart." He is not high and exalted, domineering over His pupils and making them afraid of Him. It is always the mark of a truly good teacher that his pupils do not fear him, do not fear to expose their ignorance before him. They will ask him all their questions—honest questions—with no fear of ridicule, no danger of contempt. Eager learners will find him always on a level with them in spirit, and a wise and sympathetic leader into knowledge. Such a teacher Jesus proclaims Himself. And how He had proved it. How the poor "sinners" and the outcast "publicans" came to Him. They avoided the proudly righteous and puritanic Pharisee, but Jesus was different. They felt the pull of His "gentleness" and instinctively knew that He could help them get free of sins that they had come to take for granted. And God came near when He spoke of "the Father."

In His school Jesus declares men "find rest for your souls." He was thinking of the drudging burden of the endless round of ceremonial exactions, petty negations, shallow dogmas, formal duties with which the religionists of the day loaded life down until it seemed impossible for an ordinary man to be godly. He was thinking of how hungry souls toiled in the multitudinous legalisms of an external goodness and found no relief. He knew how to rest the souls and set them free for joyous fellowship, fruitful service, growing goodness. When He said, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light," He did not mean to tell us that being a disciple of His is not exacting, nor that true righteousness is an easy task. He abundantly takes care of all that in other teachings. So soon as religion becomes really possible it becomes in a sense easy, for when it is genuine its very essence is liberating. But here the phrase of Jesus is still in the language of the school. His regulations are easy and His lessons not onerous. There are no meaningless rules in the school of Jesus and no tasks assigned for penalties. His school is governed by principles and the laws become inner regulations of the spirit. The lessons are light because they are enlightening. They put you in the way of learning deepest truths and highest realities. Pupils—real students—never object to hard lessons; they glory in them. But they want their lessons to "have some sense to them," to lead somewhere, to hold clews to life's mysteries and nature's riddles. Any lesson that does that is easy, is fascinating.

One of my boys came to my study door at night and halted. I looked up shortly and asked what the trouble was, for his face wore a look of distress. "Oh, father," he said, "I can't do these old sums." "What's the matter with them?" "I don't know," he replied, "there's no sense to them." I called him to my desk and asked: "What are they about?" He "didn't know." Upon examining them I found he was taking up a new chapter in algebra. The sums were very simple. I tried to get him to help me so that he might see some meaning to the first, but he was all blank, and when I did it he didn't seem to get an idea. On the second he followed with some sympathy. The third he did mostly by himself with a little help. The fourth he pitched into with spirit and pulled through. When I proposed that we now tackle the fifth, he declined, picked up his book and papers and said: "I can do them all right now," and went off to his room. The whole process had taken less than ten minutes. A few nights later when I was retiring I noticed that his light was burning on the third floor and went up to see why he was not in bed. As I entered the door quietly I saw him bent over his table with paper all about him and working most diligently. He heard me, but didn't look up. He called out: "Oh, dad, just give me a few more minutes. I've been working at this problem an hour and a half. I've almost got it. If you'll give me a little more time I'll get it." That was interesting. I went to see what it was, and found him at a very difficult, complicated problem. I saw that he had grasped its

principles. He knew what it meant. It was opening up a realm of mathematical truth and beauty to him. No amount of time and energy was to be counted if only it solved his problem and set him free for new achievement, fresh exploits, larger learning. A petty problem was an intolerable task when it meant nothing and got him nowhere; a very *pons asinorum* was a joy and delight if it led across the barrier to a new field of knowledge and understanding.

So we weigh lessons. So we weigh religious experience and work. Jesus liberates the soul and sets it growing. He gives us the clew to all problems and we can well give our lives to working them out, or to working at them to reach the solution in eternity, if only we know that our problems have eternal value and that we are going on to eternity with them.

In His school Jesus will teach us the meaning of life; and of sin that poisons life; of the universe and the possibilities of it; of humanity and our chance in it, and our duty; and of God and what it is to be children of the God whom He reveals to us.

We hear His invitation. His school is open. He calls the world into it. Is He what He thinks He is? Can He do what He says He will? Shall we not all go in and see?

CHAPTER VII

UPON PETER'S CONFESSION JESUS ANNOUNCES THE METHOD OF HIS CHURCH (*Matt.* 16:13-17:9)

Logically, if not chronologically as is probable also, the notable incident at Cæsarea Philippi followed by one or two months the soliloquy in which Jesus was assuming the moral responsibility of the world. Here He reaches a critical stage in the training of His Apostles. Finding it practically impossible to keep away from the multitudes in Galilee or across the Sea of Galilee, He led the Twelve on an extended tour northward going beyond the borders of Palestine toward Tyre and Sidon. There were other reasons for this tour. The experience with the Syro-phœnician woman is highly instructive.

Turning eastward, they went along the Lebanon foothills to Mount Hermon, glory crown of all Syrian heights, with its snow cap, which feeds the Jordan river.

On such a tour, unannounced and with an easy itinerary, the opportunities for quiet, serious instruction and conference were the best of all the ministry of the Lord. He uses the occasion for leading His men to face the idea of the deepest tragedy of the redeeming work. He begins with a relatively light question: "Who do men say that the Son of Man is?" We do not need to stop to

decide just the wording of the inquiry. All the Synoptic accounts agree that the disciples understood Jesus to be asking what the opinion of men was about Himself. It is worthy of noting, in passing, that He expected them to know; and that it is important always for the interpreters of Jesus to learn the current ideas about Him. The people would talk more freely about Jesus in the presence of His disciples than when speaking to Him, just as they will talk more freely of any preacher than to him. Jesus asks what opinions they hear about Him. They are ready with the answer. It was a mixed and variant answer. People were saying many things. "Some say John the Baptist; some say Elijah, and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." All put Him in the category of prophetic insight and authority, further defining according to this or that aspect of His work which most impressed them, or influenced by their special interest in this or that prophet.

1. Jesus elicits the definition of Peter's experience of Him and interprets it (16:13-17).

This first question was only incidental and intended to lead up to the real question which Jesus had for *them.* He sets them apart from others: "But ye, who say ye that I am?" That is what matters to Him, and what matters to all the world. These vague and variant, half-formed opinions of men must be instructed and corrected by the intelligent convictions of those who know Him. So Jesus calls upon them to say what they have found in Him. They have had far better oppor-

tunities than others to learn Him. They have been His friends and companions, have eaten and slept with Him. They have been closely associated with Him, some of them for a year and a half, all of them for more than a year. They have paid the price of personal sacrifice of business and family associations because of their attachment to Him. He has admitted them to the soul of Him. What have they found in Him?

Peter is ready on the instant with his reply: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Again we do not need to belabor an effort to decide the exact words while we miss the force of the confession by using up our powers of apperception in critical analysis. All the accounts agree that the confession marked a turning point in the development of the Apostolic interpretation of Jesus. It is suggested that since Matthew undertakes most fully to report this crisis and definitely marks it by a phrase (in verse 21) as a division point in his narrative of the teaching of the Master; and since Matthew's record combines the words of Mark and Luke, the most obvious inference is that Jesus used all that Matthew quotes. Sometimes the obvious explanation is the most intelligent. There is no more vicious principle in Biblical criticism than that among variant accounts of an incident or reports of a speech that the briefest is most likely to be accurate. The briefest is always condensed, as indeed the fullest must be. The way Jesus responded to the confession is evidence conclusive that He regarded it as of the highest significance. We cannot say,

"He chose so to regard it." That would attribute to Him an insincerity which is unworthy of suggestion.

It is well for us to observe the method of His self-revelation to His disciples. He has been very patient with these men while they were discovering Him. He did not begin by telling them He was "the Christ, the Son of the living God" and asking them to follow Him in that exalted capacity. He made no dogma a pre-condition of discipleship or even of apprentice apostleship. He never asked them to accept this interpretation of Himself as a "doctrine" "positively" taught. He waited for His personality to compel in them an exalted interpretation. They began following Him as teacher to find that He was "The Teacher." At first He was for them a prophet, to become "The Prophet," and in the end the Maker of Prophets. They began following "a friend of sinners" to find themselves heralds of the Redeemer from all sin. Jesus asks only that men will get acquainted with Him and then accept what they find Him to be.

The time does come when He must ask that men will define their experience of Him in terms of definite intelligent conviction. If they are to be interpreters of Him, claim Him as Master, this is inevitable. He cannot greatly use those who do not know how to tell whom they have found Him to be. Thus Jesus draws out from them this clear statement in Peter's terms.

How much this means to Jesus we can judge from the enthusiastic joy with which He greeted

Peter's words. There is a buoyant rapture in His reply that we can appreciate only if we think of this as marking the realization in Peter of what He has all these years been seeking to develop in men. What He missed so sadly in the soliloquy (Chapter VI) He finds now in this man. Here, at last, is one man in whose experience He has become the Christ, the Son of God. (We may compare the similar words of John 6:68 f.). Let us catch the note of joy as Jesus exclaims: "Blessed art thou, Simon, Son of Jonas; for flesh and blood did not reveal it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven." Peter and God agree about the personality of Jesus. It is a great thing to think with God about any matter. To agree with God about His "Son sent from heaven" is cause for holy rapture. Peter's discovery Jesus attributes to God's revelation. Every discovery is on its other side a revelation, for we cannot find out what God hides from us. On the other side, every revelation must become also a discovery, an experience, before it is vital and effective. Peter has found Jesus out, and Jesus knows that the explanation lies in the fact that His Father has been at work in Peter's personality. That is what He must count on. Now He has it. What He has achieved in Simon He can accomplish in any other man, in all men. As Paul so wonderfully puts it: "If any [one] man is in Christ there is a new [order of] creation" (2 Cor. 5:17). Jesus has come to remake humanity, in the individual. Now He has an example. He has succeeded.

2. In view of this experience Jesus is eagerly ready to announce His plan of procedure (16:18-20): "And also I say unto thee, that thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." It is necessary to look somewhat closely at this statement. Jesus is emphatic: "And on my part I say." God's revelation which has become Simon's conviction is His opportunity for starting afresh in His program. He has some material now that He can use. Long ago He had given to this man, on their first meeting, a prophetic name: "Andrew . . . findeth his own brother Simon . . . and . . . brought him unto Jesus. Jesus looked upon him and said, Thou art Simon, the Son of Jonas: thou shalt be called Cephas (which is by interpretation Peter)," which is again by translation Stone. Jesus recalls now exactly His first words to this man, "Thou art Simon, the son of Jonas." His prophetic hope of two years ago is now realized in fact: "I am now able to say, Thou *art* a stone and on the bedrock foundation of an experience of Me as God's anointed Son—an experience which is produced in you by My Father's revealing agency—I can now begin the erection of My Church which will never cease building until the work for which I am in the world is completed."

That Jesus is here thinking of Peter as a building stone, now ready to lay upon the foundation, we may find the testimony of Peter himself in I Peter 2:5, where he refers to the Lord as a "living stone"—coming unto whom "ye also as living

stones, are built up, a spiritual house, etc." Peter does not draw the distinction in his Epistle between the foundation bed-rock and the building stones, but seems to think of Jesus as the living corner stone, contact with whom vitalizes each stone to be wrought into the spiritual house. The phrase *"spiritual house"* seems clearly enough to be Peter's expression for Jesus' term Church. Into the exegesis it is not needful further to go here. Our explanation seems to fit both the words and the occasion, and to express the method of the Master.

Jesus proceeds at once to Peter's part in His work, now that he knows Jesus as the Son of God: "I will give to thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." The figure, of course, is wholly changed from foundation and building stones. Now Jesus stands Peter at the door of the Kingdom to admit men who will come in. To understand the meaning we need to take account of Matt. 18:18, where all the Twelve are charged with the duty of "binding and loosing"; of John 20:19 ff., where Jesus on the evening of the resurrection says to all the Upper Room group: "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. . . . Receive ye the Holy Spirit: whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever ye retain, they are retained." The key to the Kingdom, then, is the gospel of the saving grace of God in His Redeemer, and the Christ places the key in the

hands of all who have experience of Him. It is in our hands, not to guard against the entrance of men whose heads may be wrong, but to admit men whose experience has led them to come to God through His Son. We should connect with this John's vision of the Christ in Rev. 1:18, "the Living One," who was dead and is now eternally alive and "has the keys of death and Hades," and in Rev. 3:7, where He is described as having "the key of David, He that openeth and none shall shut, and that shutteth and none shall open." The origin of the figure is in Isa. 22:22.

It must have seemed at the time a very strange injunction Jesus now laid on His disciples, "that they should tell no man that He was the Christ." The prohibition seems in broad contrast with His delight in Peter's confession and with the keys which He will place in their hands. He is almost overjoyed at their understanding of Him. Now He can do the thing He wants supremely to do. Yet they must not say a word to any man by way of telling who He is—not yet. The explanation is quick and startling.

3. Jesus now comes, in one of the dramatic scenes of the record, to interpret the method of His Messiahship (16:21-28). Nor is it a single explanation. It is the beginning of teaching which must be the chief lesson from now on. "From that time began Jesus Christ to point out to His disciples that it is necessary for Him to go on into Jerusalem, and to suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes (i.e., at the

hands of the threefold official Judaism), and to be put to death, and the third day to be raised (or to arise)."

This announcement precipitated a stormy scene. His friends had no place for any such experience of suffering and defeat in their ideas of "the Christ, the Son of the living God." Peter was the natural spokesman now. He sprang to meet the occasion. "He took-Him-in-hand." He fairly shouted in his excited resentment against any such outcome of the work of his Lord. He almost swore. Our stately translations conceal his agitated emphasis. "He began to rebuke Him, saying: 'Mercy on Thee, Lord, not at all shall this be Thy lot.' " (*Ἱλεώς σοι, κύριε, οὐ μὴ ἔσται σοι τοῦτο.*) Peter holds the Jewish idea of the Messiahship, constructed of the Old Testament promise of exaltation and glory, and had no place for Jesus' idea constructed out of the description of a humiliated, suffering, rejected, mediatorial Servant of Jehovah. These disciples were following their King to a throne, not a cross; to dominion, not death; to glory, not to a grave.

The issue is definitely on, and it is critical. Jesus deals with it in heroic severity. Peter must not undertake to determine for Him how He shall fulfill His Messiahship. How prone is the human heart to accept the Christ and interpret Him in terms of our carnal ideals. Jesus' rebuke is severe. He uses the same terms with which He repulsed the devil when in the wilderness He presented the same idea of a material, political throne swaying the nations in martial glory, and

He calls Peter "Satan": "Be off behind me, Satan, thou art My stumbling-block, because thou hast in mind not God's ideas but those of men."

It is a stern rebuke. It was not easy for Jesus to take up the road to the cross. Now here is His best friend and highest hope, not only failing to sympathize with Him, but blocking the road of duty and destiny. Peter is a stumbling-block. The Greek word is that which we transliterate "scandal" (*σκάνδαλον*). It is originally a "trap-stick," the baited trigger that lured the prey to destruction. Peter's course would destroy the Master's character and mission. Metaphorically He must kick out of His way as a stumbling-stone this friend whom a moment ago He has hailed as a building stone for His Church, so that He may travel on the way of His Father. How near are high service and base hindering!

Jesus proceeds now to tell His disciples that not only will He go to the cross, but that they must accept the same destiny in His following: "If any man wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow on after Me." And it is no small self-denial He is setting before them. He means it all quite literally. He has, in effect, already the cross on which He will be crucified. Any man who goes after Him must accept the same principle and be ready if, and when, the issue comes to let them nail him to the cross and set it up in the ground, to die in this way. "Let him deny himself" is no call for some petty reduction of luxury or indulgence. The *himself* is in the accusative (direct object)

case; not in the dative (indirect object). It is not that I am to deny (to) myself something. I am to repudiate myself as the objective of act or thought. Self must be pushed off the throne of life's control and Christ Jesus sanctified as Lord in my heart.

The answer of Jesus to Peter's resistance of the idea of his Lord's suffering is a call to all the followers of Jesus to share in His Messianic mission and method, in His experience. He is not only to be the Redeeming Servant Himself, but is constituting a serving group who are to share and extend and continue His work in His way.

Nor does the Lord halt in His word until He has declared this sacrificial use of one's life in suffering union with Himself the only use that can endure the test of certain judgment. The man who goes about saving his life is losing it, while "whosoever shall lose his life for the sake of Christ Jesus shall find it."

No other life counts, or can count, for what advantage is it for one to gain the whole cosmic order if he loses his soul in the process and finds himself facing the judgment at the end with an empty life? Once the soul is thus lost there is nothing one may give in exchange for it. Too late one may learn values. Now, through following the Christ, even to the cross, and aye to the cross, one gains a worthy life that will not only survive the judgment, but will attain realization through judgment. It is this Son of Man now calling us to follow Him to the cross that "shall come in the glory of His Father to give back to each man

on the basis of his practice." He is the Judge and His Kingdom so near that one must reckon with it even now.

4. The clash was over, but the breach between Jesus and His men was sad and embarrassing all round. Peter had been the speaker, and had felt the full force of the stern word in reply, but he had only spoken what all applauded in their souls. Now all were subdued and puzzled. They do not know what to say to Him or to one another. He is grieved and troubled. How shall He lead them into the response to His ideal necessary for them, so important to Him. The atmosphere of their camp must have been tense and difficult. A week went by. There has been much reflection on their part, some conference and discussion it may be. Possibly He has remained much of the time apart from them. Conversation can hardly have been free. No normal teaching was possible.

Let Luke tell us how they found the way out (9:28 ff.): "About eight days after . . . He took with Him Peter and John and James, and went up into the mountain to pray." By this time these three had come to an attitude where they could at least be invited to pray with Him. We all have our misunderstandings with our Lord. We may not as frankly and as impetuously as Peter rebuke Him. We may even conceal from ourselves the extent to which our thoughts reject and resent some of His ideas and acts. Blessed are we if we may hear Him invite us to go "apart" and pray it through with Him. It took a week, in this case, for even these three to come to

the point where He could give them this prayer invitation. They remained in the prayer retreat until the next day. It was a holy season they had together. The three saw the Master transfigured before their eyes "while He was praying." They saw Moses and Elijah, and heard them discussing with Jesus "His decease which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem"—talking of the very topic which Jesus had introduced a week before and which they had so resented. We do not know how they knew Moses and Elijah. We can all believe that we could have recognized them. That is a minor matter. The point is that they learned there in the prayer heights of Hermon that Jesus could talk freely with His Father about the cross, and that Moses and Elijah—in Jewish estimate the two greatest exponents of God in Hebrew history—were ready to accept such a "decease" as He was accepting and planning. The Greek word most fittingly is (ἔξοδος) (exodos).

While Peter was proposing, oddly and inappropriately enough, that they build three booths and remain indefinitely there "a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold, a voice out of the cloud saying, This is My Son, the Beloved in whom I am pleased, hear ye Him."

Thus they had God's approval of His plan of sacrificing Himself as the Redeemer of men. The Giver of the Law and the Doyen of the Prophets had spoken freely with Him of such an exit from His human existence. Now His Father, their God, tells them that He approves His Son in the plan announced and commands them to give heed to

Him. They must accept Jesus' interpretation of the method of Messiahship and allow Him to interpret for them the way of redeeming love.

There is no word from God more pertinent for our day than this which bids men give heed to Jesus as He affirms and expounds the necessity for the cross. God says: "My Son is right about this matter: I approve His plan; listen to Him." There are preachers and theological professors and editors and writers of books who would do well to ponder this word.

We can understand in the light of the Transfiguration Message, and of Jesus' severe resentment of Peter's refusal of the cross idea, why Jesus commanded His disciples (in 16:20) to tell no man that He was the Christ. Two reasons appear which are one reason at bottom. As they came down from the mountain He commanded the three to tell no one of the vision "until the Son of Man be risen from the dead." The carrying power and the meaning would be free to work only in the light of the open grave. But in addition to that Jesus did not wish any man to preach Him as the Christ of God unless the preacher could include the cross in his message. The rejection of that idea disqualified Peter and the rest as proclaimers of the Messiahship. Until they were able to include that, Jesus sealed their lips. Without the cross Jesus would not be the Christ. He desires no witnesses who cannot see its necessity.

CHAPTER VIII

GOING TO JERUSALEM FOR THE LAST TIME JESUS OFFERS HIMSELF AS THE JEWS' MESSIAH AND THE WORLD'S SAVIOR (*John* 12)

The Gospels give large space to the events of "Passion Week," and the Resurrection. Those who subordinate the climax of the work of Jesus in the Crucifixion and Resurrection, while seeking to exalt the teachings and personal qualities, must confess to treating the subject matter on a principle different from that of the Evangelists. For the proportion of their brief narratives devoted to the Passion and Triumph must, at least approximately, represent their estimate of their relative importance.

Without putting any excessive emphasis on mere figures we may do well to see that of his twenty-eight chapters Matthew gives eight to this part of the story, Mark six of his sixteen, Luke four and a half of twenty-four, John ten of twenty-one: twenty-eight of a total of eighty-nine chapters. If we reckon actual space by pages, taking the text at hand, it is found that eleven and a half of thirty-three and a half in Matthew, eight and a half of twenty-one in Mark, eight plus of thirty-six in Luke, eleven of twenty-seven in John, tell this part of the story; or thirty-nine and a half of a total of one hundred seventeen and a

half pages, or nearly thirty-four per cent. Further, we must take account of the stories of the birth and childhood, which are even more slurred by such critics as discount the closing facts of Jesus' life. Thus we should deduct from the full story more than four and a half pages. In addition to this we should need to take account of the space given to John the Baptist's work. The outcome would show that the Evangelists devote two-fifths of their account of the work and teaching of Jesus to the seven days of the climax in Jerusalem and the Resurrection appearances. There is no need for exaggeration to see that they must have reckoned the experiences and teachings of this climax as of major significance—an estimate which is most emphatically reaffirmed in the accounts of their preaching and procedure after the Ascension.

The experiences and teachings of this period will rather naturally fall into four divisions. First are His free experiences and teachings in public, mainly in the temple on three days. These include contacts with the populace, with the Jewish officials, and most extensively with the various Jewish parties all of which set themselves to hamper, embarrass and discredit Him, and gave Him occasion for some of His most direct and weighty words of authority and of judgment, as well as most incisive and far-reaching words about His Kingdom and human history. (For these we would study Matt. 21-23; Mark 11-12; Luke 19: 29-21:4; John 12:9-50.)

Next are the experiences and teachings of Jesus

with His friends, usually with His enemies and the masses absent. These occasions gave opportunity for intimate interpretations to part of which the next chapter must be devoted. They include, of course, the so-called "Eschatological Discourses" of the Synoptics. (Matt. 24:1-26:46; Mark 13:1-14:42; Luke 21:5-22:46; John 12:1-8 and 13-17.)

Third, we have the experiences of Jesus in the hands of His enemies and the few pregnant words spoken by Him during these experiences. (Matt. 26:47-27:66; Mark 14:43-15:47; Luke 22:47-23:49, with seven additional verses telling of the burial of the Body by Joseph; John 18:1-19:37, followed by the brief story of the burial by Joseph and Nicodemus).

Finally there are the Resurrection accounts with which the final chapter of each of the Synoptics and the last two in John are engaged. In the brief days of "Passion Week" what intense and varied experiences we find. How crowded and crammed the heart of the Master, and withal how wonderfully masterful He moves. Never once does He lose control of events, situations, men or circumstances, never is once put on the defensive even under the most determined, shrewd and calculated attacks of all His enemies. How much He did and said and experienced, and never became hurried, never lost poise. It all seems to move even as if it had been planned. When they finally take Him in Gethsemane He must needs urge them on to the act as they hesitate, while He calmly asks that His disciples be left alone, and turns

Himself over to their will, because back of, and even through, their will He sees the moving purpose of His Father and the progress of His program.

We must read all the words and deeds of this final Jerusalem experience in the light of those numerous statements that reveal the prescience of Jesus and His determination to face His destiny and fulfill His work in the triple tragedy that is enacted in Jerusalem—the tragedy of sin in envy, hate, falsehood, betrayal, cruelty, murder; the tragedy of weakness in blindness, impotence, denial, unbelief; the tragedy of love in voluntary acceptance of all the experience in behalf of those who imposed the tragedy upon Him.

It was some months before the climax that His followers realized that "He (had) stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem," although they did not at all comprehend that He was moving in the consciousness that "the days were being fulfilled that He should be received up" (Luke 9:51). Luke has rather carefully traced for us the marks of this steady purpose. He realized that He had come to cast fire upon the earth and longed for its kindling. But first there is for Him a baptism of bitterness and He is under constraint until it is experienced. He foresees the division and strife His saving work is to produce even in the most intimate relations of life. Deeper than all that conflict must His own struggle go, and His suffering lead the way. Only through tragedy can He win men and produce the Kingdom of redemption (12:49-53). "He went on His way through

cities and villages, teaching and journeying on to Jerusalem" (13:22), in connection with which statement Luke tells how questions arose out of the general, if vague, sensing of unusual events. Certain Pharisees came to advise Him to get out of Herod's territory because Herod desired to kill Him. Jesus replied: "Go and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I end my course." Then He turned to the Pharisees to say that not Herod but Jerusalem, the Capital City, would slay Him, and He wept at the tragedy for the city (13:31 ff.).

Again "as they were going on their way to Jerusalem" He healed the ten lepers and commented significantly on the ungrateful neglect of the nine Jewish lepers while only the Samaritan returned to thank Him (17:11 f.). The questions asked Him and His replies and parables were all now looking toward a consummation which all could feel, but which only He understood.

As the end grew very near "He took unto Him the Twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written through the prophets shall be accomplished upon the Son of Man. For He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked and shamefully treated, and spit upon: and they shall scourge and kill Him" (18:31 ff.).

On the last stage of His going, when He was accepting the hospitality of Zacchæus at Jericho He explained that "the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost. And as they

heard these things, He added and spoke a parable, because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and they supposed that the Kingdom of God was immediately to appear." The parable was that of the nobleman who went into a distant country to receive a kingdom and gave the ten pounds to his servants to use until his return. "And when he had thus spoken, he went on before, going up to Jerusalem" (19:1-28).

John equally makes clear the deliberate foresight with which Jesus progresses to the culmination of His labors. In it all He goes with the assurance of His Father's loving approval and of His own autonomy in His self-giving: He is laying down His life for His sheep; "Therefore doth My Father love me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it again. This commandment I received from My Father" (10:15-18).

Of all that was done and said in the climax week it is not possible, nor is it necessary, for us here to speak. Postponing for the next chapter the intimate talk with the Twelve, we may find in John 12 the foundation for the revelations of Himself which Jesus gave in His contacts and interpretations at this time. And we may observe that in this one chapter we have all that John records of the contacts and conflicts leading up to the arrest and trials.

1. It is good to begin with the social feast at Bethany given by "Simon the Leper," at which

Mary anointed Him for His burial (1-11). It is an encouraging prelude to the strenuous week. Love and gratitude pay tribute to His grace and encouraged His spirit. Matthew and Mark preserve it also. Simon doubtless owed his healing to Jesus. Lazarus was there, not more than six weeks before called back from death. Martha was among the ministrants at the feast. Mary seized the opportunity to show her love and to make her tribute in a remarkable act, the aroma of whose sweetness, by the wish of the Lord, has attended the word of His grace into all the world and will to the end. For Jesus greatly appreciated it and interpreted it as prophetic of His burial. It would be a woman's insight, quickened by love and guided by an intuitive sensing of the outcome of hatred in conflict, with her limitless devotion, that would foresee the death and anticipate the anointing for which opportunity might be wholly lacking in the violence which she foresaw. For was not the sinister shadow of Satan's rage over even this scene of appreciative service, in the grumbling of Judas about the "waste." At all events, Jesus relates it definitely to His burial. For Him now all things relate to His death.

The presence of Jesus soon became known and became the chief interest of "the common people" and the chief concern of "the chief priests." The curious wanted to see Jesus but even more to "see Lazarus who had been raised from the dead," and the priests went so far as to consider sending Lazarus back to the dead, "because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed

on Jesus." We see how Jesus was the revealer of all men's hearts. Truly "for judgment He was in the world," however much His heart's concern makes Him say (12:48): "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world."

2. "The Triumphal Entry" into Jerusalem (12-16) is the practically universal title for the incident next in our passage, and has been for centuries. Yet how is it possible to look beneath the surface, in the least degree, and find any element of "triumph" in Jesus' experience in riding into the Holy City at the head of this kindly hearted multitude? Almost every feature of it speaks of spiritual tragedy. There were kind, believing and loving souls crying their "hosannas," and "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings" God was "perfecting praise" for His Son. But what were even these friendly, trusting souls expecting in "the King of Israel" they hailed, and how many of the children in manhood and womanhood would crown "the Son of David" in their hearts to reign over their lives?

The three comments John is led to make upon the incident, looking back from a long distance, help us to get it in right perspective. He says that "the followers" of Jesus did not now understand the relation to the scriptures in Zechariah, but connected them with the facts only "when Jesus was glorified"; that the multitude, to be sure, "bare witness" to Him, but that they were drawn by their excited interest over the raising of Lazarus; and that the Pharisees were only distressed because they were accomplishing nothing

to destroy His popularity, for "lo, the world is gone after Him," calling for more plotting unto desperation against Him on their part.

How then ought we to regard this misnamed "Triumphal Entry"? How else than as the formal offering of Himself to the Jewish people as their promised Messianic King? The severely simple, almost sordid, manner of it was to reëmphasize the teaching of all His ministry that His was not to be a reign of might, a display of grandeur, nor a rule of force. He came "lowly and riding upon an ass," the carrier and carriage of a peaceful monarch, manifesting the simplicity of spirit of one who came to share and meet the needs of humanity. If He could have been received on His own terms in His own true character, as King of men's lives in spiritual rule of righteousness and reverence, the cross might have been avoided. Human nature was here showing the depths of depravity that called for the cross. He had no illusion about the outcome. Yet it was no make-believe, but a sincere offer of Himself—an offer needful to fulfill all God's promises and to establish His righteousness. It stands to-day as His rebuke of the demand of Jews then, as well as of the ambition of men to-day, for glory, honor, display, might, imperialism in the reign of the Christ.

It is in full keeping with this interpretation of the incident that it is His first approach to and entrance into the city upon this final fateful visit. Succeeding days will be marked by conflicts between Him and all the parties and officials of His

people. First of all He gives them one more chance to see Him as the Deliverer and King, one more chance to accept Him.

In these succeeding days He will meet every sort of jibe and thrust, argument and ridicule, snare and assault, from Pharisee and Sadducee, from zealot and lawgiver. He will reply in questions that startle, confuse and silence; in parables that expose and condemn while they hold solemn warning and powerful persuasion; finally in a sevenfold series of woes upon "scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites." His parables reach a climax in that of "the wicked husbandmen" who scouted the householder, insulted, maltreated and slew his servants, and killed his son to appropriate the vineyard for themselves. Then He went on to apply it by citing the psalm about the stone rejected by the builders that became "the head of the corner"; and closed by saying quite plainly: "Therefore say I unto you, the Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you and given to a people [not *nation* as in our translations] producing its [true and appropriate] fruits. He that falleth on this stone shall be broken to pieces: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust." Matthew says "the chief priests and Pharisees" understood the application and would have arrested Him on the spot but for fear of the masses who reckoned Jesus "as a prophet"—not the Messiah (see Matt. 21:23-46).

At the close of the "woes" (Matt. 23) Jesus shows how the attitude of the leaders to Him amounts to confession that they "are sons of them

that slew the prophets," and boldly places Himself in the position of maker and controller of "prophets, wise men and scribes" whom He will send "unto them," but whom they will "kill and crucify, and scourge and hound from city to city" bringing upon "this generation" "all the righteous blood shed on the earth" from Abel to Zachariah. We cannot fairly face words like these without seeing Jesus assuming the highest prerogatives and responsibilities of the Supreme Representative of the Holy and Sovereign God and functions committed to no man in the history of revelation.

Moreover we witness in the progress to the city in this "Entry" a compassion, a yearning, an anguish of grief that call for some adequate explanation. As He came along the road from Bethany rounding the Mount of Olives the city came to view, resplendent in the reflection of the morning sun from gilded roof and tower of the temple on the Hill of Zion. How much it all meant to Him now. "He wept over it saying: If thou didst know in this day, even thou, the things that make for peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes." Then He sketched in terrible, brief outline the destruction of the city "because thou didst not recognize the opportunity of thy visitation" (Luke 19:41-44). This lament becomes yet more impressive and interpretative if we connect it with two others. First, in Luke 13:34 f., when He had announced to "certain Pharisees" who pretended to warn Him against Herod that no prophet could "perish outside Jerusalem," His

heart burst forth: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen her own brood under her wings, and ye would not!" Again, Matthew (23:37-39) gives this same lament as the closing public utterance of the Lord in the temple before He goes out for the last time. That He repeated it thus is not difficult to believe and is the more plausible when we note that Luke records two such laments; and they all reveal the estimate Jesus is placing upon Himself as He comes to the city for this final test of the attitude which the people and the nation will take toward Him. It is their salvation if they accept, their doom if they reject. And they are typically human, but with a thousand years of preparation for this crisis. If they reject Him human nature must have the power and potency of His sacrificial, mediatorial death. Humanity reveals itself as Jesus interprets Himself in its presence.

In this connection we must not overlook the cleansing of the temple. John has recorded a similar act at the first visit to Jerusalem after Jesus' baptism (John 2:13-22), for apparently John intends for us so to understand the time and circumstances. Certainly the Synoptics teach that He did cleanse it on the day of the "Entry," asserting His sovereignty over His Father's House of Prayer.

3. John next introduces us to an incident of one of the days in the temple which he alone has preserved, and which is most significant in Jesus'

interpreting of Himself (20-36). John makes no distinction of the days and devotes only this chapter to the temple experiences.

The request of "certain Greeks" to "see Jesus" led to an expression and experience of His not surpassed in all the evangelic story for significance. These Greeks were among those who had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and so were what Luke, in Acts, calls "God-fearing men." It is interesting—it may be significant—that it was Philip to whom they made their polite request to be introduced to his Master, and that Philip, in doubt what to do in the unusual matter, went to Andrew for consultation. Both names are Greek —meaning *horse-lover* and *gentleman*—which indicates that they might be men of broader sympathies than the average Jew. They go to Jesus with the request.

His response must have startled them and puzzled them. Evidently it very greatly stirred Him. Apparently it stimulated Him to a fresh and high consciousness of the hopeful outcome of His self-sacrifice. It was for this that the Greeks are introduced into the story. We are not even told whether Jesus received them. We surely have no doubt, but the point of the story takes a remarkable turn, with several instructive items. Jesus hailed the request as a note of the hour for the glorification of "the Son of Man." But it does not divert His mind an instant from the need for death. Rather He uses the occasion to teach afresh and with striking clarity and emphasis the principle of His working—*life through death.*

With the double *amen* of vigorous emphasis He points out that the unplanted grain of wheat remains just itself, while that which goes in the soil produces much fruit. Applying His simile, He says that the man who is concerned to save his merely human life loses it, while he who hates the this-world life may be guarding it for the life eternal. There are two words in the Greek text for life: ψυχή psuchē and ζωή zōē. Eternal life differs from this-world life in quality and therefore in duration. Simply to keep on breathing, no matter how healthily and contentedly, may not be to "live." What are the years of a Methuselah if continued existence is all they signify? There is a way of life that transmutes living into life and makes it inherently "eternal." And Jesus calls the man who would reckon himself His servant to follow His ideal and stand with Him. "Where *I* [emphatic] am, there also shall My servant be," and He was at that moment under the shadow and meaning of the cross. "His Father will honor the man who honors this Son of His." We cannot honor Him unless we approve in practice His ideal of life.

If we follow up His use of the term *life* (of this world) we shall find Him saying in verse 27: "Now is my life torn to pieces." The words also easily translate as in the ordinary versions. In any case they express the extreme stress of soul. We should include two sentences in the question, not one as in most versions, thus: "And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour?" Shall He ask that He be spared the tearing out

of His life as He takes sinful humanity into His heart? Shall He seek to be let off with an easier way of producing the fruit of redemption in the soil of human nature? May He in any case abandon humanity without dying with it that it may live in Him? Now that He has shown men a perfect example of self-giving living must He admit that they cannot follow and that He cannot stop short of death for those who will slay Him? He answers His question. First, He cannot ask to be let off, "But this is why I came to this crisis hour"; then this one request: "Father, glorify Thy name," by making My death fruitful in life for men.

We cannot wonder that the Father answered with strong assurance. "He has already glorified His name in His Son's life, and He will glorify it yet," in the manner prayed for. To the puzzled people, discussing whether the word they heard was thunder or the speech of angels, Jesus, whose spirit caught the message fully, explained that the voice was "for their sakes." It is a judgment hour for this world. Its ruler is to be hurled out of it. It is not possible certainly to say whether Jesus refers to the rejection and murder of the rightful Ruler of the world, or to the overthrow through His death of the usurping ruler. The first would seem better to fit the whole context. In either case Jesus turns to speak of His crucifixion with the assurance of His Father's word: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, shall draw all men unto Myself." He, no doubt, referred to the lifting up on the cross. Beyond that

lay the lifting up "out of the earth" in the Resurrection; and then the lifting up above the earth's sordid condition and base ideals through the message and the living of His believers. Thus unswerving and unafraid He goes to "fall into the earth" for all men. It was the coming to Him in this critical hour of the Greeks that gave Him this vision of "all men" drawn to Himself. The Greeks stood for the whole heathen world at the moment. The attraction of the cross was the vision of His insight, the ground of His confidence.

4. The people got enough understanding of His words to know that He was talking of dying. They raised a question which showed how far they were from His insight. If He is the Christ—and such they now see He seems to be claiming to be—"the Christ," according to the scriptures, "abideth forever." What then is He talking of by such words? Who is "the Son of Man" about whom He so often speaks? They had understood Him to mean Himself; but now it must be some other? Jesus replies only indirectly by a challenge that they (all of us) take advantage of the Light while we have it. One may be pardoned for introducing a childhood memory with a life-long meaning. The great old family Bible, probably 10 x 14 inches, whose pictures, pages and passages I pored over and pondered, had very thick covers, deeply indented with beveled depressions. The sections thus made were ornamented with texts in gold letters. Two of them stick in my memory. One was "Search the Scriptures." It was the

other that was imbedded in my soul and associates itself with that Bible and with the mother who taught me to read it as God's word.

It was the words of verse 36 in this passage: "While ye have the Light, believe in the Light, that ye may be children of the Light."

5. A paragraph follows next telling of the reaction to Jesus; how notwithstanding His many signs most did not believe on Him, could not, in fact, believe, for Isaiah's description is true, that pictures the hardened heart and blinded eyes of men; how some even of the rulers believed, but would not confess Him because of their fear of excommunication—believed but did not trust (37-43).

6. Then John's last word concerning the open ministry of Jesus (44-50). "Jesus cried and said" words that identified Him with His Father in saving grace, words that invited faith in Him that men might know God. He has come to be this world's Light, that men may no longer walk in darkness. Those who will not hear His sayings in faith He will not judge, for He "came not to judge the world, but to save the world." Yet His coming will issue in judgment for unbelievers, for "in the last day" the word of Jesus will condemn the unbeliever. His words are the commandment of His Father, given faithfully and unerringly, and are, therefore, eternal life.

It is a good word with which to end the record of this ministry. Jesus has said wonderful things in the incidents here recorded. He has linked with a perpetual proclamation of His gospel the

deed of Mary in anointing Him for burial, thus making His death the heart of the Gospel of the Kingdom forever. He has laid down a law of life through death as the law of all human realization. He has made a man's standing with God to turn on the man's attitude toward Himself. He has heard His Father pledge Him success in His sacrificial death, and has predicted a universal attraction for His cross. He has passed judgment on the Hebrew nation and pronounced the doom of its sacred capital and the destruction of its temple of worship. He had made His ministry and message the touchstone of destiny for all who come under His words. In it all His heart has wrung with a passion more than pity, a yearning of infinite love that comes to its pause preaching "eternal life."

CHAPTER IX

IN THE UPPER ROOM WITH THE TWELVE JESUS PROJECTS HIS WORLD MOVEMENT (*John* 13-17)

Jesus clearly aimed not so much to do a work as to inaugurate an enterprise. This is evident so soon as one takes serious account of His ministry as a whole. Even if His own unerring insight had not discerned this true method He would have found it well defined for Him in His Bible. Isa. 49 and 52:13-53:12, and Ps. 22 give almost a detailed outline of the plan by which He worked and which He turned over to His Apostles and His church to carry on and carry out "in His name." These scriptures we know from His own words were part of His personal scriptures. And every Christian has his personal Bible gathered out of *the Bible* as experience, insight and study advance. It was not otherwise with the Christ.

The first thirteen verses of Isa. 49 so completely outline the experience and method of Jesus that if it were possible critics would beyond question decide that they were written after Christ. Jehovah's Servant calls the isles and distant peoples (i.e., all humanity) to hear while He outlines Jehovah's plan and pledge. "Called from the womb," His name is mentioned from "the bowels of His mother." Compare "Thou shalt

call His name Jesus for He it is that shall save His people from their sins." He is most carefully selected and guarded and brought to use at just the right time. Jehovah designates Him "Prince of God" (translation of *Israel* in verse 3) in whom Jehovah is to be glorified. Yet in actual experience He finds the outcome of His ministry so small and discouraging as to lead Him to say that it has been a useless expenditure of strength, a fruitless labor. Still He claims fidelity and appeals to His God for vindication. How perfectly this fits the experience of Jesus the least reflection will show. Of all the hundreds of thousands who professed following He is able to find never more than from five to six hundred to meet Him after rising from death and sending invitations to His friends to meet Him on a mountain in Galilee. (See Matt. 28:16 f.; I Cor. 15:5). There were "about a hundred and twenty" to see His ascension and wait at Jerusalem for the Power of Pentecost and to take up the work of witnessing. To His plaint of failure Jehovah replies to His Servant that this is only the first stage, the beginning which is to reach out now and include all men: "I will also give Thee for a light to the nations, that Thou mayest be My Salvation unto the end of the earth. Thus saith Jehovah, the Redeemer of Israel, his Holy One, to Him whom man despiseth, to Him whom the [His] nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers: Kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall worship, because of Jehovah that is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who hath chosen Thee." The section continues

with further details of assurance and promise that they shall come to His Servant from furthest lands (west), from north and south, "and these from the land of Sinim [Chinese?]."

All are familiar with the fifty-third of Isaiah. The chapter should begin (as the paragraph so manifestly does) at 52:13. Thus read the ultimate glory and honor of Jehovah's "wise Servant," when He will startle (not *"sprinkle"*) many nations and receive the abashed homage of kings, is most strikingly seen to follow a period when He has astonished them with His humility and lack of pretentions, when He was humiliated and "led as a lamb to the slaughter," and "cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of My people to whom the stroke was due." He is to "see the travail of His soul and be satisfied," because "by the knowledge of Himself" He is to "make many righteous."

In the mist of the agony of the cross at the darkest moment of the consciousness of the blind rejection and the ribald raillery of the people for whom He was dying Jesus quotes aloud the first phrase of Ps. 22, in the Hebrew: "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"—"My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46.) Hence we may know how He undergirded His spirit by this entire psalm, and how He interpreted Himself in its light. The details of description of His experiences on the cross in the first twenty-one verses are amazing. Then follows in five verses His expression of confidence and faithfulness in His purpose. Then a closing paragraph gives the

assurance of Jehovah of the wide, complete success of His undertaking to rescue the world. Other psalms and other prophecies might be cited as helping to formulate the consciousness of Jesus as He came to His crisis and endured it, but these sufficiently illustrate the thought.

For the night of the betrayal He evidently planned deliberately, and, in view of all the facts, very skillfully to have several hours with the Twelve alone around the Passover table and under the olives of Gethsemane. The Passover was kept by them in the "large upper room" of the house of some man whom we may think of as a well-to-do friend of Jesus. It is open to each man to make his own guess at the details of the preparation. I prefer to think that Jesus had privately arranged with His friend for the use of the room. It would aid in securing privacy—a very difficult thing for Him—if no others knew of the arrangement. At the proper time Jesus sent two of the Twelve to make the preparation, the friend providing only the room and the necessary furniture. Going by the fountain where servants came for water the two would see a man come for water. This was a very unusual thing. Women were the water carriers. This friend had a man-servant to do it, probably the only one going to that fountain. Him the two would follow and thus locate the room and make the needed preparation. At the evening hour Jesus and the Twelve went in quietly, possibly not all together, and assembled about their table for the Passover which Jesus says He had earnestly desired to eat

with them before He should suffer (Luke 22:15). Thus they were together for some hours. Judas was eliminated after efforts of Jesus, that arouse greatest admiration for their delicacy and gentleness, to give him opportunity to reconsider his perfidy. They continued to converse until it was time to leave the room. We may find two good reasons for "going out" (John 14:31). Certainly Jesus wished to go to His often used prayer place in Gethsemane. But also He wished further talk with the Eleven. Judas would get all arrangements completed and come with the officers, of both Jews and Romans, probably to the room first. By going out at the opportune time the party seeking Him would be delayed and time would be gained for further conference and prayer before Judas, taking advantage of His knowledge of Jesus' habit of prayer in Gethsemane (John 18:2), should come upon Him with the officers and the mob. This seems far more reasonable than to suppose that John has jumbled the talk and put the departure from the room at an impossible place in the narrative, as many do (see especially Dr. Vedder in his generally very fine work on *John and the Johannine Writings*).

The fullest report of that high and holy night is found in John's Gospel. To it he devotes five chapters.

It is a bold undertaking to try to present in one brief study these five chapters, impossible if detailed exposition should be undertaken. It is important that they be treated as a whole. Only thus can we get their movement and see their

central, constructive idea. Every Christian knows "the fourteenth chapter of John"—he thinks he does—and most of us can begin quoting it at once. Yet very few would be able to give offhand much, if anything, beyond the eleventh verse. Many know verse twenty-seven, but would not be at all sure of its location. Yet it is only at verse twelve that the real subject, the chief concern of Jesus in the chapter, comes to us. There can be no accurate understanding of the great interest of Jesus on this wonder evening unless one makes a full study of all five chapters. It is especially important that we begin with chapter 13, which relatively few seem at all definitely to connect with this Upper Room Talk. One of our ablest writers and interpreters recently in Sunday School Expositions dwelt on the Discourse, undertaking to call attention to the entire address, and entirely omitted the first chapter of it.

The subject most popular for this Talk for centuries has been *"Jesus Comforting His Disciples."* That element is certainly found here, but it is subsidiary to the main purpose. Jesus is preparing His Apostles to succeed Him as Kingdom Builder, to take His ideas, His objective, His plan, His death and resurrection,—to take Himself,—out into the world and set this force to work in the regeneration of the human race, for its reconstruction into a "new humanity." He is taking these "friends" whom He has chosen and leading them into all the program which the Father has made known unto Him (see 15:13-16).

It is for this purpose He "chose them, and appointed them; that they should go, and bear fruit, and that their fruit should abide." Then He adds, as summing it all up: "That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it to you." He makes them His complete representatives—that alone exhausts the meaning of "in my name." As they thus represent Him on earth they will have authority to represent Him in drafts on His all-powerful Father for supplies for every need.

Our effort now must be to discover the chief topics of the Talk of this night. It is not a formal address but familiar talk. It cannot be analyzed into separate topics, moving steadily to a climax. The same topics will recur at different stages of the evening's progress. Jesus would introduce some subject, then drop it for another, later to revert to it. Yet certain items emerge as chief terms in the instructions, directions and pledges which He is giving to them. The occasion was most suitable, most impressive. They knew that the supreme crisis was at hand. They did not at all comprehend its form or its outcome. Yet they would be very receptive and would recall what was now said for use in the days to come when they could understand and apply it.

1. His first emphasis is on the spirit which must rule in them as His friends and representatives. It must be the spirit of humility and of service. This must be produced and mediated by a love of one another which will bind them together in a unity, free from all selfishness and

every form of self-preferment. This is the first topic, and to it He recurs in almost every section of the discourse, stressing it with the utmost emphasis. He even puts this plea on the basis of "a new commandment," that they shall love one another; "Even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another."

They were not long in giving Him occasion for this teaching after they had come together. Luke's plain exposure explains more fully the cause of the washing of their feet at the table (22:24): "There arose a contention among them, which of them was accounted to be greatest." This was an old contention among them. It seems shameful for it to arise at this meeting which was so meaningful. Jesus heard the words, whispered though they may have been. Already He knew the ambitions in their hearts. He waited for the expression of it. Getting up from the table, He laid aside His long outer robe, girded a long towel about His waist, filled the basin with water, and without a word began bathing the feet of the disciples. Amazed and abashed as they were, no one spoke until He reached Peter, who questioned Him. Jesus postponed until later any explanation, whereupon Peter declared vehemently that the Master should never wash His feet. To this Jesus replied: "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." Peter missed the point entirely and now impetuously said that if it came to that he was ready for a bath from head to foot, "head

and hands as well as feet." Jesus then went straight to the seat of the trouble in them. They had all taken a bath before leaving their lodgings for the Passover room. On the way only their feet had become soiled. There was no servant at the door to wash the dust off as they slipped their feet out of the sandals. Some one of them should have offered to do this service. Possibly any one of them would have been willing to do this for the Master. But the occasion is too big with possibilities for any one of them to risk humbling himself now. Kingdom offices may be assigned this night. If one offered to bathe His feet he might be embarrassed not to go further, yet to wash a fellow disciple's feet would be to confess inferiority and make a bid for secondary honors under the Kingdom régime. So all went unwashed to the table.

Jesus replied to Peter that any one who had had his bath needed only the washing of his feet to be wholly clean. Then with a subtle spiritual turn He added: "And ye are clean, but not all." The shadow of Judas was clouding His heart. The words would be an invitation, as well as a rebuke, to the Traitor. Taking His place again at the table and waiting for all eyes to look inquiry, He explained the act and pressed the lesson. To share His work and Kingdom a man must share His spirit, for He must be able to send a man out with such spirit and such expression that receiving him will mean receiving the Master and God who sent the Master. Christ's man must link up in a unity with Christ and God. Here is the

center of His method for winning the world—God, Christ, the believer, wrought into a unity in this world by the love of the Holy Spirit. And it is only the believer that the world sees, physically. How dreadful! How glorious! How it burns out all self, and burns in the brand-marks of the Christ! Thus Chapter 13. And the idea is not left behind through all the night.

2. The first eleven verses of Chapter 14, especially, stress the necessity for accepting Jesus as the truly complete, unique representative of God the Father for humanity. If we believe in God we must believe also in Him. He is the Way to God, the way of God, the way of a godly man. If one wishes to know what a true man on his way to God is like here He is. He is the Truth of God, of man, of religion, of duty, of world interpretation. If one wishes to know how he shall think to think truly let him learn the consciousness of Jesus—His God-consciousness, His world-consciousness, His sin-consciousness, His destiny-consciousness. He is the Life, the life of all that lives, the eternal life of all that shall live. It is not in jealous exclusiveness that He says: "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me," as if He is unwilling for any one to find His own way, or be led by another. It is because He alone knows and shows the Father; for there is no salvation in any other, His being "the only name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

He is, therefore, most eager that men shall see the Father in Him. Philip says, "Lord, show us

the Father and it satisfies us," and grieves his Lord that after so much association Philip does not yet know Him. He longs for the faith that identifies Him in character with the Father. He desires the faith of spiritual insight. But if one cannot yet rise to that, let him support his faith by observing the works of Jesus, for they are the works which God alone could do or would do. In any case He pleads for faith that He is in the Father and the Father in Him. It is because men must know His Father that He is here to show them the nature of His Father and to awaken faith in Him.

3. Next He proceeds once more to a theme so often on His lips, the place of the Believer in His work and plan. All the talk of the evening circulates about that center. He has been leading up to that. He will build about that in all else He has to say. Its most succinct, condensed statement is in 14:12-15: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth in Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater *works* than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, that will I do. If ye love Me, ye will keep my commandments." Here it all is in a nut-shell. He has begun a work and made possible the doing of it. Believers in Him will both be able and responsible for doing the major part of the work He has undertaken; and if they love Him they will do it. He goes to the Father and from that position works with those

who labor "in His name," releasing the divine energy in ways that multiply His working presence and distribute it in His workers everywhere.

4. In the face of this assignment to His friends of the "greater works" of His Kingdom enterprise Jesus naturally passes to the promise of the Holy Spirit to enable them in wisdom, energy and spiritual unity with God and all other believers. The teaching concerning the Holy Spirit features largely in all the rest of the Discourse. The most extensive parts being at 14:16-24 and 16:7-15, with the characteristic, determinative function of the Spirit stated in 15:26-27. He comes as the Spirit of Truth to bear witness to Jesus along with His followers who are "also to bear witness."

It is unfortunate that the Greek name of the Holy Spirit has come so widely into our English translations as *"Comforter."* Efforts to avoid this narrowing of the Spirit's function to correspond with our thought of comfort in bereavement or other distress, by transliteration of the Greek word—*Paraclete*—do not help much except for Greek scholars. We really have no English term with the connotation of the Greek. The word is a verbal adjective and means the "One-Who-May-Be-Called," or equally the "One-whose-function-is-to-call." The thought will vary in shade according to the circumstances of the believer. The Holy Spirit may "comfort," "help," "challenge," "arouse," "stimulate," "enable." No one word being equal to suggesting

all these functions, it is important for Christians to study the subject and in prayerful experience learn the "fellowship of the Spirit" in His many relations. In them all His one concern and activity is to "take the things of Jesus and show them unto us," "to glorify the Christ" never "speaking from Himself" (16:13-14).

He is to be sent by the Father (14:16), and by the Son (16:7), and to come of Himself (15:26). It is important to observe that He is to come unto, upon, into believers—witnessing believers and, coming unto them, "to convict the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment" (16:8). He must come to the friends of Jesus because "the world cannot receive Him because it does not see Him [by physical sensation] and does not know Him [by spiritual sense]" (14:17). Hence if Jesus is to get at, and get into, the world it must be through the friends of Jesus. Of course Jesus does not here mean to exclude that direct work in the souls of sinners of which we read in Acts. But we must keep in mind that He does this at the same time He works in some human witness with the gospel message.

His first work in the believer is to build up in him unity with the Father and the Son, to make him an abiding place for the Christ and His Father. For all this a genuine, vital love of the Christ is necessary (14:18 ff.).

Jesus expresses disappointment (14:25-31 and 16:5-7) that the Eleven do not now trust Him more and ask Him where He is going. There is nothing for them to fear or over which to be

troubled. He is at peace and wishes to impart His peace to them. If they had assumed that His plan was right and good and taken a trustful attitude it would have been easier for Him to explain to them. Their minds and hearts would have been more receptive. But they have felt that of course it is bad for them if He is to be taken away, and "sorrow hath filled their hearts." "Nevertheless," He says, "I tell you the truth," even unasked, "it is expedient for you that I go away" (16:5-7). For at least two reasons this is true. It is better to have Christ spiritually within one than physically with one; and it is better to be made a faithful witness for the indwelling Christ than to be permitted to be a happy associate of Christ. Both these things the Spirit realizes in us for our Lord.

5. Jesus devotes a large part of Chapter 15 to emphasizing His dependence on His friends for effecting the purpose of His presence in the world: glorifying His Father. This He does under the Parable of the Vine and its Branches, passing on to direct speech after dropping the figure.

He is the true vine planted by the Father. His friends are the branches, on which alone the fruit of the vine is borne. All the Father's concern and care are that they bear much fruit. "Herein is the Father glorified" and that glorifying of the Father is always the highest note in the aims of Jesus. To this end He has chosen, protected, taught, appointed us, and has put us into such relations to God that we may command all the resources of the Infinite to realize His purpose.

To this end we must "abide in Him" for "apart from Him we can do nothing." For this end we must bear any hatred of the world, as also any pruning of fruitless branches by the Father's husbandry. How earnestly Jesus seeks to make this fruitfulness of His followers a consuming purpose and passion.

6. We must go to the Synoptics for one chief incident of the evening. John introduces the thought of it, but not the actual founding of "the Memorial Supper." Luke gives us the best glimpse of the emotional intensity of Jesus' interest in it. He is pouring out His blood and giving His body "for many for the remission of sins" (Luke 22:14-23; Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25). Thus He gave to His followers a picture of His self-giving. He elevated His death into the central place in the institutional life of His following. His self-giving was for Him the blood of a New Covenant of God with humanity, a covenant between Himself and His Church, an abiding testimony of His love and life and of our dependence upon Him. As the living Father sent Him and He lives because of the Father so all who eat His flesh and drink His blood, in the sense of spirit and life, these live because of Him (John 6:54-65).

7. In it all Jesus is not losing sight of the heavy strain of faith, courage, understanding and loyalty which His friends must undergo in the hours just ahead. He does not dwell much on the gloomy, gruesome details. He does tell them that the Shepherd is to be smitten and the sheep scattered; that they are all to forsake Him; that Satan

has asked permission to try them in his sieve expecting to get out some of them. He even warns Peter that he is such a small grain that Jesus has prayed especially for him. To be sure Peter gave Jesus to understand that He need waste no worry on him. But He touches all this rather lightly. Their best preparation lies in a deepened confidence in Him, a fuller assurance of His mastery of all conditions, a genuine devotion to His service with a sense of their vital importance to Him. He does warn them that they must be prepared for all sorts of persecutions even to being put to death (16:1 ff.). They must be prepared to get on without His physical presence. He will see them again, however, and will give to them a joy which no man can take away (16:17 ff.).

At last they profess vigorous, understanding faith in Him. They know that He has come from God. With a sigh of relief He says: "Do ye now [at last] believe?" Quickly He comes to the end of His talk, closing with the striking words: "These things have I spoken unto you that in Me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." With this He turns to His Father in prayer: first the prayer with the Eleven at the gate of Gethsemane; then going on a little further to wrestle alone with His own grief and sorrow over the sin of men that crushes out His life.

All the thought and plan and passion of the whole evening finds condensed expression in the prayer with which it closed (Chapter 17).

It falls very obviously into three divisions, but

with intimate connection of all, and so with easy and not sharp transitions from stage to stage. There about midnight or after, by, or a little within, the Garden, under the full moon—Passover was always at full moon—with the Eleven grouped about Him, Jesus "lifted up His eyes to heaven and said: Father, the hour has come." It was the pivot hour of history, the destiny hour of humanity, the time hour on which the two eternities bend. All His life has led up to this hour; all His hopes and plans hang upon it. What will this One, who has called Himself Son of Man and permitted men to call Him Son of God, say to His Father in this hour?

First He talks of Himself and His work (1-8). His first concern is for the glorifying of the Father. "Glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee." This glory will come through giving eternal life to men. He has glorified the Father by finishing all the work He was personally to do. He has made eternal life a reality in these men whom it was appointed for Him to win directly. They are the pledge of others to be won; the vitalized leaven to work in, and to win, the mass. He has gotten them "out of the world," manifested the Father's character (name) to them, caused them to know that He came from the Father, that the Father sent Him and that His plans and methods were brought from the Father. The words of the Father they have now received and they thoroughly know that Jesus has brought God's word and will and person to them. His work is done and waits its continu-

ance in these men. The glory of the Father, eternal life for the world through the knowledge of the true God in Jesus Christ sent from God—this is the burden of the first section of the prayer.

Next we hear Him talking of these men whom the Father has given Him (9-19). He prays for them, not for the world, but for these men whom the Father gave Him out of the world. He has won them, guarded them as their Savior—the name the Father gave Him. "Jesus" means *Savior* and He says He has proved Savior, save, alas! in the case of Judas. His loss is not in the deepest sense a failure, but it costs a hurt in the heart which we cannot appreciate. Now Jesus comes to the Father and leaves these men in the world. He knows well what an unfriendly world it is, how dangerous for men who do not "belong to this world any more than He belongs to it." Yet He will not have them taken literally out of the world, for the only hope of the world is in the presence in it of men who are spiritually no longer of it. They must—all the men of Jesus must—be guarded from the evil of the world so that as the Father sent Him into the world so He may send them into the world. His hope and His love now rest upon them. He desires that they shall be wholly dedicated ("sanctified") in the truth. It is for their sakes that He now—as ever—dedicates Himself that they, too, may be truly dedicated to God in the cause of Jesus Christ. His dedication means unto crucifixion, ours must mean no less if that way lies our service.

In the third place He extends His prayer to

include not only those He has won but "them also that believe on Me through their word" (20-26). It is the continuous present and leaves Him ever praying for all believers. There are three petitions for them. The first is for their unity; the second for them to be with Him; the third that the love wherewith the Father has loved Him may be in them.

This unity is here His great concern. He desires that believers "may all be one, even as we are one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us." The glory of unity with Himself which the Father has given the Son the Son now seeks to give—"has given" —to them. That glory is "that they may be one; I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be perfected into unity." He desires that the believers may be so with Him that they may see the glory of His unity with the Father in that eternal love "wherewith the Father loved Him before the foundation of the world." The use of pronouns and conjunctions in these sentences emphasizes the demand in the will and active participation of each member of the unity: Father, Son, Believers. How important then that we give attention to this great longing of Jesus. We ought to try to understand what is the nature of the unity desired, its method of realization and its purpose. It is sinful for any followers of Jesus to be indifferent to it, not persistently to join Him in praying for it. It is no superficial organic union that He seeks, no subjecting of all Christendom or all Christians under one centralized human

control or administration determining for believers their beliefs, their worship, their activities in service. It is a spiritual unity in which every member draws unlimited and uninterrupted life from the center—God—and expresses that life in full activity in harmony with the united whole. We come into this by the perfecting of our unity with Christ. But we need beware of the delusion that we can be at one with Him while we are severed from one another and lack both coöperation and unity with those who are equally to be included in the unity of Father-Son-Believers.

Nor must we overlook the objective before Jesus all the time He is praying for this Unity. Each time He prays for the unity He expresses the purpose, the end it is intended to serve and accomplish. First it is "that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me," next "that the world may know that thou didst send Me, and lovedst them, even as Thou lovedst Me." Then as He comes to the climax of the prayer His heart seems to break in an agony of longing for the lost world that must be saved through the knowledge of Himself: "O righteous Father, the world did not know Thee, but I knew Thee." That is why He is in the world. He could not stay out of it while the men in it did not know His Father. He could not abide in the glory that was His and leave men in the desperate shame and loss of dishonoring His Father. "And these came to know that Thou didst send Me." That is the beginning of the redemption of the world through knowing the

Father. They are His hope. They are the instruments through which God will answer His world-reaching prayer. "I made them to know Thy nature ["name"] and I will continue to make them know, so that the love with which Thou didst love Me may be in them, that I may even be in them." In them He will continue to make the world know the Father "till all the ransomed church of God be saved to sin no more." In this assurance He turns to His own private prayer—His Gethsemane—to His surrender to the world.

If, now, we pause to look back on Him through that night's words what do we see in Him? What revelations of Himself has He made to us? These stand out:

1. There is the majesty and poise of a perfect surrender to service at supreme cost. He has shown such mastery of Himself that we think of the whole scene from the standpoint of His comforting and heartening His disciples in their bewilderment, grief and weakness. It hardly occurs to us that if He is just one man, even though a most unusual man, among the dozen, and anticipating, with a clearness which they only partly share, that in the next hours He is to suffer insult, injustice, insolence, humiliation, judicial murder, then they should be encouraging and comforting Him. We hear Him say: "Let not your heart be troubled; neither let it be afraid"; "My peace give I unto you"; "Believe in God, believe also in Me"; "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Somehow we must feel

that He is more than Master of Himself and of the situation.

2. He is the Master of an enterprise for all humanity. His undertaking is of the supremest importance to all men. They must know Him and feel the force of His enterprise and respond to it or they are hopelessly ruined. He is really making Himself the hope—the one hope—of humanity.

3. We cannot overlook His willingness to invest in His enterprise each and all His followers at any cost to them. He is consciously subjecting them to suffering, losses, persecutions, death. A man may have a right to invest himself thus; but what can justify one in assuming that "for his sake," "in his service," "for his plans," they shall abandon all and suffer all. Jesus does not ask them to do it for a principle, nor for a cause, nor even for humanity. All these He includes in what He places above and about them all. He puts it personally. He asks men to *do this for Him.* Every great idea and every noble cause finds expression in a dominating person who becomes identified with it; but the man commands and sacrifices his fellow men in the name of the cause and not in his own name. Jesus was not, in our usual use of the phrase, the incarnation of an idea nor the impersonating of a cause. He was always more than the idea and greater than His cause. He embodied them and included them, but He differs from other leaders in His own way of regarding Himself and in the way men regard Him in relation to His cause.

4. The most amazing feature of His words and

bearing on this last night, had we not already naturalized it in our thinking of Him, is His calm assumption of absolute authority to interpret God and to command the activities of the Holy Spirit. He tells God's nature, ideals, plans, purposes with a tone of unquestioning finality that still does not betray the slightest consciousness of daring. He even says as if it were a commonplace that His followers should have known: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." He tells the functions of the Holy Spirit whom He, equally with the Father, will send to carry on His work. He relates all the meaning and ministry of the Holy Spirit to His own person and plans. On the basis of such assumptions of reality and authority He projects and predicts history. Is He right in His estimate of Himself or were the Jews right in making an end of Him because of even so small a part of such claims as they grasped? "Who is this Son of Man?"

CHAPTER X

JESUS, RISEN, COMMISSIONS HIS FOLLOWERS TO CARRY HIS SALVATION TO ALL MEN (*Luke* 24)

(Cf. John 20:19-21:23; Matt. 28:16-20; Mark 16:14-20; Acts 1:1-11)

The last chapter of Luke gives us the clearest and fullest account of the first day after the resurrection. Here alone, supplemented by a few verses in John, we have the story of His first meeting, in the evening, with a group of His disciples. Here then we properly begin our study of the Resurrection Words of Jesus.

Early in the day some women of the following of Jesus had gone to the tomb with spices which they had prepared, and returned to report that the body was gone from the tomb and that they had seen a vision of two angels who told them that Jesus was alive. Mary Magdalene claimed to have seen Him and to have talked briefly with Him. The apostles regarded this "as idle talk," yet Peter and John ran to investigate and "found it even so as the women said: but Him they saw not." Rumors rose and spread and excitement filled the group of followers.

The experience of the two who went in the afternoon from Jerusalem to Emmaus forms an interesting and instructive link in the story. They

were intently discussing what had occurred when a third person approached and for a time walked along, silently and drawing no attention from the two. At length He asks what words these are that they are so vigorously exchanging evidently with excited intensity. They stopped still in the road scowling. One of them, Cleopas by name, replied in an amazed and rebuking tone: "Do you live off to one side alone in Jerusalem, and didn't find out what was going on there in these days?" All innocently Jesus draws them out by saying, "What things?", as if there could be but one topic in all the city on this day. It is a very graphic summary they give if we allow the colloquial form of speech to get over into English: "The things concerning Jesus the Nazarene, who got to be a prophet man powerful in work and word in the face of God and of all the populace, how our chief priests and our rulers turned Him over (to the Romans) for a death judgment and they crucified Him. Now we were cherishing the hope that He was the one who was going to liberate our Israel. Yes, and along with all this it comes to the third day since this occurred. But also some women of ours astounded us." Thus they went on with their story. Then Jesus took it up: "O foolish men and slow in heart, to believe in all things which the prophets said. Was it not necessary that the Christ experience all this and enter into His glory? And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets He interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things about Himself."

Thus they arrived at Emmaus, where at the supper table He revealed Himself to them in some characteristic way or word as He took the bread, gave thanks and gave them food. No one else did this like He did. They recognized Him and He disappeared.

Notwithstanding all the day's excitement and the seven-mile walk and the night, they set off for Jerusalem again, while upbraiding themselves for their lack of recognition. "Hadn't their hearts been fired as He opened up the scriptures. Of course it was He. No one else could have made them so meaningful, so wonderful." Back in Jerusalem they went straight to that upper room —probably Christ's Passover room—which they knew was the meeting place of the disciple group. They made themselves known and gained admittance to find the excited interest very tense. They were greeted with the announcement, "Really the Lord is risen and He has been seen by Simon." But they must be allowed to tell their story. But while they were in the midst of it Jesus Himself suddenly took His position among them. No explanation is given. Had He come in by a window? Speculation avails nothing here. It was not an apparition; no ghost as they at first thought. He thoroughly identified Himself. His first word was in effect repeating the last word at Gethsemane three nights before: "Peace to you." Then while they were frightened and fearful still He said: "Why are ye frightened, and for what reason do doubts arise in your heart?", which at once recalls His saying in the Upper Room: "Let

not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." He invited them to touch His body and see that He had flesh and bones, and to examine the wounds in hands and feet. Then for further confirmation He asked for food and ate before them. By these means He overcame their doubts, quieted their fears, gratified their joy, assured them of His resurrection. They knew Him intimately, thoroughly. They identified Him in spirit and in body. There was no mistaking His words, no other ever so spake. He began where He had left off talking with them before His death. Death had not broken the continuity of His life, nor of His relation to them. All was as He had foretold. "After a very little while" they saw Him again and were filled with that irrepressible joy of which He had spoken (Cf. John 16:16, 19-20). The personal identification was the first and most important thing.

And here was His body, too. Nowadays there are those who question the body. They tell us excess of credulity, over tense nerves, fear and autosuggestion, some or all of these were getting in their work. They point to the differences in the use and manner of the body before and after the grave. All these things the disciples have dealt with and answered. They were there. They knew Him. They were absolutely convinced of His triumphant life, of His body's resurrection and of its changed quality and handling. It is impossible to resist them without becoming irrational.

So soon as they were in proper frame for giving

good heed to Him Jesus began connecting His life and ministry with their experience and mission. He gave them a commission. Every time He meets a group of His disciples after His resurrection it is to give them this commission, with varying emphasis, but with the one insistence. Out of His "High-priestly prayer" the Eleven could recall—could not but recall—His words, "Just as thou didst send Me into the world, I on My part sent them into the world." So now, at the very beginning, according to John's account, He addresses them, saying a second time, "Peace to you," and immediately adding: "Just as the Father has sent Me, I, on My part, send you." "And on saying this He breathed on them, and said to them: Receive ye the Holy Spirit, whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted for them; whosesoever ye retain, they are retained."

We may now devote ourselves to Luke's account and try to reproduce by reconstructive imagination the picture he gives us of that first resurrection evening together. We cannot know just how many or who were present besides ten of the Twelve. Ten, for John tells us that Thomas was absent. Certainly there were others, apparently a goodly company, twenty or thirty one may guess. Remembering that the Emmaus brethren had come some eight miles after supper and reckoning time for the appearance of Jesus and for quieting and assuring the company, and reaching a condition where Jesus might wisely begin His discussion, we may suppose it was around nine in the evening when He said: "These are My words

which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses and in the Prophets and in the Psalms, concerning Me." They ought not to have been so staggered by His cruel and shameful death, nor now so amazed that death had not been able to hold Him. For a year He had been telling them of all this. It was only what a right reading of their Scriptures would disclose that had been done.

In His words, "while I was yet with you," He has suggested that His presence now is different, temporary. It is no longer to be as in the former days. Every word they hear now will be significant, precious. He desires them to be instructed accurately, sufficiently, so that they will have working convictions and directions. "Then opened He their minds that they might understand the scriptures." Perhaps this is Luke's equivalent of John's words that "He breathed on them and said: Receive ye the Holy Spirit." We cannot suppose that He depended on their recalling all the scripture they needed to know and on their interpreting it correctly. Luke surely means for us to understand that into the opened minds Jesus poured the scriptures as He interpreted and applied them. He has spoken of things written concerning Himself in each of the three divisions of the Scriptures into which the Jews classified them. We must suppose that from each of these divisions He selected such parts as would best enable them to understand Him and His relation to God's plan in the Hebrew revelation and

history. He was the fulfillment of God's purpose and working.

They may well have had there in the room rolls of the Scriptures from which they had been seeking some light and understanding during the dark days of His entombment. He would not need these, but to have them might make more real their interpretation by Jesus.

From the summing up which He gave at the end we may easily find some of the sections which He certainly unfolded to them, and we may be fairly sure in case of others. "In the law of Moses" we cannot think of His not beginning with that first promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). There can be no doubt about His emphasizing God's plan announced in the call of Abraham, to make him a blessing such that in him and his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed, and that faith, issuing in obedience, made of Abraham a "friend of God" and constituted the beginning of God's revelation in history.

When Moses halted the refugee Hebrews at Sinai to organize them into a nation his first message from God was the revelation of God's purpose in their deliverance and the condition of His covenant with them and His care of them. Before giving them even the Ten Commandments and the rest of their moral law, before their system of worship or any political organization and civil institutions, God gave them a national ideal (Ex. 19:1-6). God's call to them was moral and ethical. He was not excluding others, but adopting

a method to realize His interest in all nations, "for all the earth is Mine," He said; and Israel must be for Him a priestly nation to lead the nations in the worship of their God. We could with much probability designate other parts of the law of Moses which Jesus used on that night. These are the most obvious and will suffice.

When we turn to "the prophets" we are at once embarrassed with the wealth of material. Our studies have led us at every turn to follow Jesus in interpreting these great spiritual messages of God. In the summary of His teachings He quotes from the forty-third and forty-fourth chapters of Isaiah so that we may know He used these chapters, in both of which God explained that His purpose in calling, saving, preserving His people was that they might be His witnesses, in the presence of all the nations of the world, that He alone is God and Savior. The same message is to be found in Amos and Micah, in Jeremiah and Zechariah. Joel would so easily provide Peter a text for Pentecost if a few weeks earlier he had heard Jesus interpret it. The passages about the suffering Servant, like Isa. 49, 53, Hosea in many places would explain the death and resurrection and be explained by them. Daniel, Ezekiel and much of Isaiah would link up the followers of the Redeemer with Him in the redemptive work. The closing chapter of Isa. (66:18-24) would now be understood to set out strongly God's purpose to gather all nations and from them all to choose priests and Levites to serve even as the Jewish priests did. This new heavens and new earth

which Jehovah means to create He keeps ever before Himself as goal and end; and He also keeps always in mind as the means for reaching this goal the spiritual seed of His people.

The prophecies of the Holy Spirit and His part in the redeeming work we have seen in one of our studies. These Jesus would bring forward at this time.

Of "the Psalms" that He must have used we can now have no question about the second, twenty-second, fortieth, sixty-seventh, ninety-sixth. They deal with the universalism of His reign, His sufferings, His dedication to His undertaking, the place of God's people in attracting, winning and welcoming all peoples to their God.

Thus the hours went by as the awed, wondering, inspired men and women sat and stood about their Lord as He opened up to them their Bible. Their eyes were wide, their mouths often agape in amazement, as their hearts burned within them at the new understanding of God's word and ways.

It would be toward the morning when Jesus paused in His teaching and summed up for His eager listeners what He has found for them in these scriptures. "Thus it is written," He said. That is what God put into His revelation. If we read it as God meant it we will find in it what Jesus found. Here it is as He outlined it in résumé:

1 "The Christ (Messiah) should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day." This He adduced from all that great body of the writ-

ings of Isaiah which set forth the suffering of Jehovah's Servant and the outcome of that suffering in a great extension of redemption and righteousness until all the people of the world should be included: "the peoples from far" and the inhabitants of "the isles"; from the unselfish, suffering love of Hosea in behalf of an errant, dissolute wife; from the experiences of Jeremiah, and his messages to all the nations; from Jonah's story and the parable of death and resurrection which He had previously drawn from the experiences of that prophet; from the crucifixion psalm, (22). The Suffering Redeeming Servant in the Prophets is sometimes the nation, herself needing repentance and cleansing, but always with a view to her being thereby fitted for large helpfulness; more often it is the faithful believers—"the Spiritual Israel"—who must suffer with, in and for the sinful nation and for the heathen world, and in whose deliverance there will come salvation for the nations; most intimately it is some individual, whose description finds no adequate bearer until Jesus comes and stands among men, lives among them, dies in their midst and at their hands, appropriating to Himself the prophetic outline and now, in the light of His recent experiences, incorporating His own believers with Himself in a saving enterprise that calls on them to give themselves at all cost to the redeeming work.

2. "Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name." Every stage and almost every page of the Old Testament bears the

call to repentance; and the perfect insight of Jesus saw this initial necessity for man if he will come to righteousness and truth, to God and His Kingdom. "Repentance must be preached." Remorse men cannot avoid; resentment and self-commiseration they freely indulge; but repentance, turning back from their sins in shame and humiliation to seek forgiveness and grace for better conduct, these come from the call of God to their souls. We easily blame our circumstances and lament our misfortunes, but Christ Jesus calls us to the consciousness of our own responsibility and the guilt of our own undoing. He does not overlook the forces of environment and heredity which set the soul sinward and blow upon the sails to drive to doom. No less than the heavenly Father "He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust." Yet He knows that a man cannot be righteous without the will, the purpose, the active response to an urge to manhood. And this conception has for its reverse side the use of the autonomy of individual freedom to accept and use the evil urge to work unrighteousness and to grow in sin. The will may be weak, but it has its direction. The purpose may be frail, but it may incline to this side or that. The Gospel of Jesus Christ sets up the holiness of God as the contrast that convicts of sin; and provides for the taking away of sin and guilt as inviting to repentance; and offers to faith, through a rebirth and constant renewal, the reenforcement of will and effective energy to work righteousness and achieve character.

Jesus well knew—never another half so well—all the modern psychologists tell us of the instincts and the habits, but He was no determinist. He knew the tremendous force of behaviorism, but He was dead set against yielding to the inheritance from the past, and surrendering to the momentum of the mass. His call was always that a man must not be "behavioristic," but by turning from the soul's limitations, repenting of its vices, receiving the manifold grace of God, one should escape the behavioristic way of weak determinism and enter the sphere of a "new humanity," whose ideal and goal is "to will and do the things that please God well."

From what is to us the Old Testament He gives to His followers support of His own consciousness that God has thought all history worked for the call of man out of his natureism, animalism, behaviorism; and that now in Him deliverance is amplified and becomes determinative in the progress of the human race.

3. Hence this preaching of repentance of sins by men and the taking away of sins by God must extend "unto all the nations." He had no trouble showing to "minds opened to understand the scriptures" that this was the range of God's purpose from Abraham to Himself. No stage of "election" had ever meant exclusion, but always was the calling of some to be the means of blessing the many. Moses and all the prophets would proclaim this truth with an emphasis that only blindness could overlook, and lead all who saw with God to see "His mercies and righteous reign

reaching from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." There could be no true understanding of God's blessings on any group that was not interpreted in the terms of that temple chorus of Ps. 67:

"God, even our own God, will bless us.
God will bless us;
And all the ends of the earth shall reverence Him."

One of the messages from Isaiah which Jesus brought to His audience that night (43:8-13) was a call of Jehovah that all the nations of the world be brought together in a conference for the comparison of their religions. The spiritually "blind" "have eyes"; the religiously "deaf" "have ears." Let them all assemble and defend their faiths and justify their ways from their history and moral outcome. If they cannot thus justify their ways let them listen to Jehovah's message and exclaim: "That is the truth." Jesus says the day has now come for this conference, this comparison, this turning to God's good message.

The preaching properly begins in Jerusalem, but there it has only its beginning. Speedily, steadily, persistently, faithfully it must be "preached unto all the nations."

4. "Ye are witnesses of these things." Jesus is here quoting the words which in Isa. 43:10 follow immediately on Jehovah's call for the conference of the nations for comparing religions.

He turns now to His people and says: "Ye are My witnesses," and proceeds to explain that it is for this purpose that He has chosen them to be His servant; that they might know Him, believe Him, understand that He is the one God, besides whom there is no Savior. He has all along declared this, saved people and so proved His saving purpose and power, so that it is no new message, but an approved truth which He asks His people to present to the nations. Then He repeats: "Therefore, ye are My witnesses," adding for their encouragement and assurance in testifying for Him, "and I am God, yea, from this day forward I am He; and there is none that can deliver out of My hand; I will work and who can hinder it?" The same message and call to be Jehovah's witnesses is given, somewhat more briefly, in 44:6-8. This call Jesus now makes to His followers and commissions them to bear this witness to the ends of the earth.

5. But they are not yet ready to begin. It is not their witness alone even as He told them the night of the betrayal. It is a joint witness. The words are ours, the power is His. "And behold [see here], I send forth the promise of My Father upon you; and do you wait in the city until you are clothed with power from on High." This promise of the Father was part of the program of the Son for His servants. So definitely God had linked the Redeemer, the Holy Spirit, the message and its heralds in Isa. 59:20-21. Jesus is still loyal to the plan of His Father, revealed equally in His Bible and in His consciousness. It is futile

for men to testify of Christ apart from the Spirit. The Spirit bears His testimony in the words and works of believers. There is a wonderful phrase in Judges (6:34, margin) which says "The Spirit of Jehovah clothed Himself with Gideon." We are to be garments for the working God. On Pentecost we are told that the Holy Spirit filled the room where the witnesses were waiting, so that they were in Him; then we are told that they were all (singly) filled with the Holy Spirit. This union is what Jesus provided. We are clothed with the Holy Spirit, and He clothes Himself in us, and Christ Jesus becomes known, and saves the world.

This commission Jesus renews some time later, as recorded in Matt. 28. The exact time we cannot tell. He sent messages to His disciples to meet Him in Galilee (verse 7), where disciples were most numerous. Matthew tells us only of the Eleven, Paul tells us of more than five hundred (I Cor. 15:6). The emphasis in this commission is a bit different, but the content and purpose are the same as on this first meeting. He has entire authority in His program, in heaven and on earth, and so responsibility for all mankind. With this authority and to meet this responsibility He commissions His people to go and make disciples of all the nations, to teach them all His principles. And He pledges His own presence with them all the days until and into the consummation of the age. He is counting on this method, through believing men working with Him,

to bring to completion the age of redemption which He has inaugurated.

Forty days after the Resurrection He is again at Jerusalem with a group who number "about a hundred and twenty." In this period He has "given commandment through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles whom He had chosen," given them definitive evidence of His living reality, and has spoken to them all necessary "things concerning the Kingdom of Heaven." He charges them once again not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait there for the fulfillment of the promise of the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist had introduced water baptism as a symbol of His message. Jesus had taken it over and deepened its meaning. Now He refers to this baptism of John and puts over against it as still necessary for the work of His witnesses—and more necessary—the baptism of the Holy Spirit which they are to receive in a few days. He leads the little group—the net working product of His ministry—out to the mount of Olives. He declines to discuss with them any topic but that one of their representing Him in the world as His witnesses. This time the emphasis is on the witnessing in a geographically enlarging campaign. They are to begin "in Jerusalem"; then "in all Judea and Samaria"; thus reaching out "unto the uttermost part of the earth." For this work they are to receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them. With these words—these last words: "witnesses unto the uttermost part of the earth—as they were

looking He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight." His words are ended—the words of this one Friend—words no one of which we can wish to have changed, nor for which we need ever apologize (as P. W. Wilson has so strikingly said). Fittingly these last Ascension words are recorded in Acts (1:1-11)—not elsewhere—in Acts, which is the first chapter in the history of the witnessing to Jesus by the Holy Spirit through the redeemed seed of the Christ of God.

In the Resurrection Words of Jesus what impression does He make? What self-expression do we hear?

1. He makes Himself the key to the understanding of the Bible. That is most remarkable. He does not use the scriptures to explain Himself, but Himself to explain the Scriptures. The meaning of all parts of it, the relative importance and the right emphasis, are all to be determined by how they relate to Him. Thus for their Bible, the Old Testament. He made it Old by providing for a New Testament. Yet so far as we know He said never a word to any disciple of His about writing of Him. He made it inevitable and the Holy Spirit witnessing with them and within them taught them where and what to write as it might be needed in the use of the campaign on which He sent them and His Spirit. Thus every New Testament word derives its meaning and application from Him. He made Himself the key to the whole Bible.

2. Equally He made Himself the key to God's

plan in history. He does not *give,* but He *is* the plan of God's world-making and remaking, Paul is but reflecting this teaching of Jesus when He tells us that God projected His plan of the Ages in Christ Jesus (Eph. 3:11), as saith also Hebrews 1:2, which declares that God made Him "the heir of all things" because "through Him He had constructed the ages."

3. Jesus makes Himself the hope of humanity. He reasserts this in all the commissions by inevitable implication. His gospel—the gospel of Himself—must be preached unto all nations and all must be made disciples of Him.

4. Jesus assumes all the way through this period, what we have seen in all His ministry growing into ever-increasing clearness and emphasis, that He is the Master of all godly men. He has not hesitated from the first day to say to any man, "Follow me," at whatever cost. Now He commissions these men of God, with an authority unlimited, to the work which He has planned. This is the Jesus whom we have to interpret—the Jesus to whom each one of us must make his answer.

EPILOGUE

Now that we have tried to listen with mind and heart to Jesus of Nazareth as He spoke significant words on strategic occasions in His life, what has He seemed to be saying concerning His own conception of Himself? or what has He said of Himself when He seemed not to be talking of Himself, and yet was revealing most deeply the quality of His personality?

1. He assumes a relation to God that no other ever assumed, when He called Him "My Father." This is our first look into His consciousness. It is deep, but seems very clear. It is a boy's consciousness; but it is the characteristic note of His thought of Himself in relation to God without ever a questioning, with never a shadow of wavering. And He longs with intense longing that all men shall share this relation, receive from Him right to address God by the same word.

2. He dedicates His life to the fulfillment of a purpose so staggering in its holiness and its fullness as to take away our breath as we hear Him undertaking "to fulfill all righteousness." He asks to be buried symbolically in His baptism into this purpose—an idea which more and more clearly forms a definite feature of His aim and expectation.

3. He fights out every aspect of temptation and comes forth "full of the Holy Spirit" to live and

labor and suffer by principles that involve absolute self-denial, the use of none but the appeals of truth and character, to live only in worshipful obedience to every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

4. Selecting one of the highest scriptures setting forth God's purpose in His promised Messiah, He makes claim of being its fulfillment and of inaugurating the long promised and eagerly expected "day of Jehovah's favor." As His ministry proceeds He steps inevitably into picture after picture of Messianic prophecy as the central figure. He makes a claim to a relation to the Old Testament program and promise that no human being ought ever to think of making.

5. He assumes leadership of "the Kingdom of Heaven" and announces ideals for those who follow Him into that Kingdom that are the despair and the hope of humanity through all the centuries. He outreaches the ideals of all ethical teachers since the world began, corrects Moses, goes to the heart of every form of conduct and announces that men will be judged by Him on the basis of their attitude to His ideals and especially to Himself.

6. In the face of deep disappointment with the ethical shallowness and spiritual superficiality of men He will not surrender, but assumes the moral burden of the race and invites all weary men to come to Him for relief.

7. He announces His method of winning—by the cross—that startles all His followers and loses Him most of them. Yet He stedfastly sets His

face for the cross and calls every man who wishes to follow Him to deny himself and come on in His way.

8. He exults in the thought of death, seeing in His falling into the earth the multiplying opportunity of the grain of wheat, and declares that by being "lifted up from the earth" He will "draw all men unto Himself."

9. He assumes command of men, control of the Holy Spirit, absolute interpreting of God, and mastery of the destiny of the world, all at the moment when He is passing into the Eclipse of the Cross.

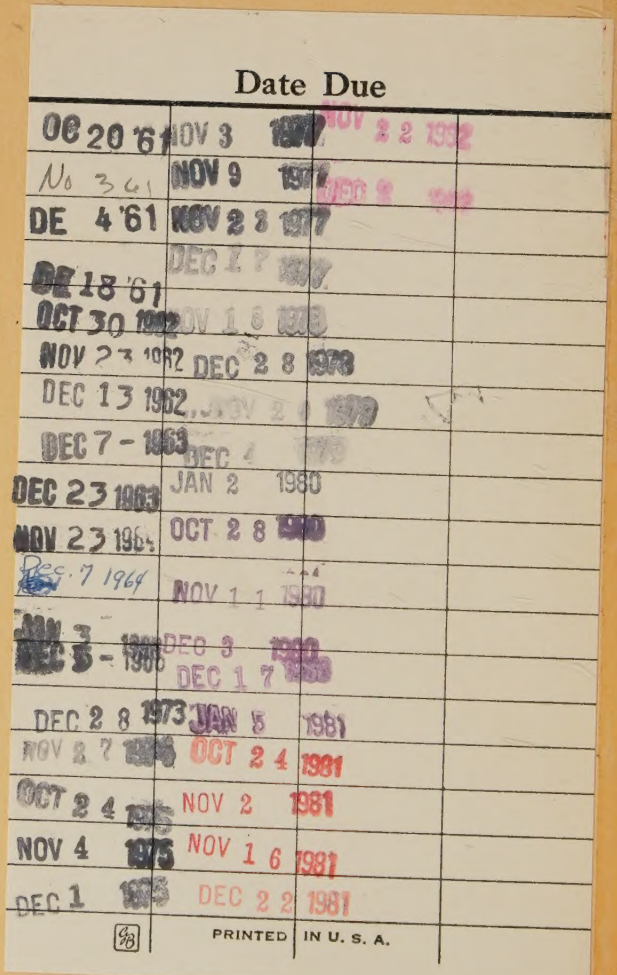
10. After having been buried in a tomb sealed by a Roman officer, He appears repeatedly to His friends and commissions them to take up Him and press forward the world enterprise He claims to have inaugurated. And they did it—have been doing it these nineteen hundred years. To-day He is not only the supreme figure of history, the center of conflict in thought and in social theory, but the creative force, the challenging personality, the shining hope of humanity.

How shall we explain all this? What shall we say about Him? Did He dream all these high things and still succeed in maintaining a poise and sanity that save Him through sixty generations from any suggestion of madness? Did He form all these high dreams and claims into a program and then succeed in "getting by with it" until this shrewd twentieth century, when men have grown learned enough and scientific enough to discern His error?

Did His peasant and fisher followers imagine a fanciful Christ and foist Him on their own generation with projectile power that would not exhaust itself but continue to increase through two millenniums?

Is He the Christ of God, the Savior of Men, the Builder of the Kingdom of Heaven? What is He to me?

THE END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